



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

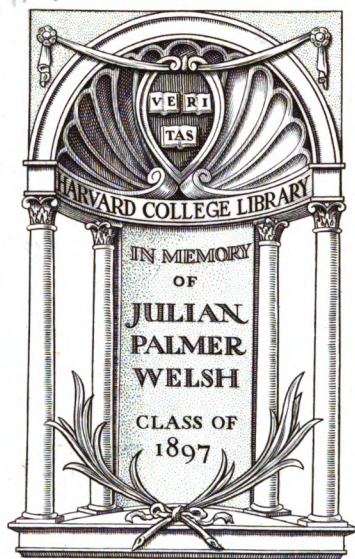
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

AL
1193
5.15

AL1193.5.15



1879

1880

1881

93 100

AL 1193.15.15

EDITH VERNON:

OR,

CRIME AND RETRIBUTION.

A Tragic Story of New England.

FOUNDED UPON FACT.

BY F. A. DURIVAGE,

AUTHOR OF "ANGELA, OR LOVE AND GUILT," &c. &c.

"In families like ours, in which crime is hereditary, and transmitted, like the name, from father to son, it always happens that this fatality ends with a murder, commonly a family murder, a closing crime which swallows up all others.

Victor Hugo. Lucrece Borgia.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY F. GLEASON, 1 1-2 TREMONT ROW.

1845.

JONES, PR., 42 CONGRESS ST.



THE WILD HUNTSMAN SURPRISED BY JUDITH, THE OLD CRONE

[See p. 16.]

EDITH VERNON :

OR,

CRIME AND RETRIBUTION.

A Tragic Story of New England,

FOUNDED UPON FACT.

BY **F. A. DURIVAGE**,

AUTHOR OF "ANGELA, OR LOVE AND GUILT, &c. &c."

"In families like ours, in which crime is hereditary, and transmitted, like the name, from father to son, it always happens that this fatality ends with a murder, commonly a family murder, a closing crime which swallows up all others."

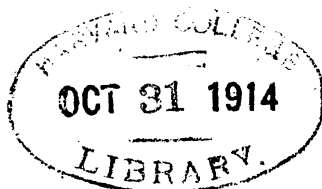
Victor Hugo. Lucrece Borgia.

BOSTON :

PUBLISHED BY F. GLEASON, 11-2 TREMONT ROW.

1845.

AL 1193.5,15



Welsh fund

ROBIN' OCT 1915

PREFACE.

THE following story is, as it professes to be, founded upon fact, the materials being drawn from one of those trains of tragic circumstances, 'stranger than fiction,' happily of rare occurrence in New-England. 'In writing 'Angela,' a story commenced without any definite catastrophe in view, I found myself once or twice treading unconsciously on the confines of this tragic story, but I retraced my steps, being not then fully prepared to follow out the subject.

Subsequent reflection convinced me that the tale, however tragic, was not unsuited to the taste of the times, or the legitimate sphere of a story teller. I have accordingly caught up the thread of narrative, and woven it into the woof of my fancy, endeavoring to make my own materials, and those I found ready to my hand harmonious in their conjunction.

It would have been easy to have followed facts throughout the story, but I preferred, from obvious reasons, to change localities, and make such other alterations, as I deemed necessary to veil the source of my story from all not intimately acquainted with the history. Some of my readers may recognize a parallel to a domestic tragedy, whose dreadful details made the theme of many a whispered conversation years ago; but the majority will accord to me alone praise or blame for the whole affair. If the latter preponderate, I shall have a heavy account to settle with my publisher; if the former, I shall be profoundly indebted to the public.

THE AUTHOR

Boston, Nov. 30th, 1844.

EDITH VERNON.

CHAPTER I.

BOSTON THIRTY YEARS AGO. WASHINGTON STREET. THE LADIES.
DELINEATION OF A DANDY. A BEAUTY. RENCONTRE IN HANOVER
STREET. THE IDIOT. A FORTUNE TOLD.

'And light alike of heart and step, she bounded on her way,
Nor dreamed the flowers that round her bloomed would ever know decay ;—
She had no winter in her note, but evermore would sing
(What darker season had she proved !) of spring—of only spring.
Alas ! alas ! that hopes like her's so gentle and so bright,
The growth of many a happy year, one wayward hour should blight.

A. A. Watts.

The reader who commences the perusal of this humble narrative is called upon at the outset to exercise a portion of his imaginative faculty. He must go back, as it were, some thirty years or more in time, and picture to himself the Washington street of the good old *town* of Boston, not as it now appears, full of stately edifices, tasteful blocks and splendid stores and dwelling-houses, but winding its way, under different names, like a long river, between rambling and ill-assorted wooden houses of different dates and styles of construction, with here and there a brick building apparently thrown up to render the aspect of the street yet more chequered and various. Thirty years effect a vast number of changes in a new city ; and though we are wont to regard Boston as a very venerable place, it is yet in its infancy when compared with the cities of the European continent. A new people build for the present and the actual ; posterity and elegance are not cared for until several generations of citizens have passed away. Boston has not yet put on its evergreen garb—the staid and steady aspect it is destined to wear to the eyes of travellers alike in 1900 and the century beyond. I know not whether the Boston of to-day is more picturesque than the Boston of thirty years ago ; for then its aspect possessed the charm of contrast and variety, each house stood upon its own foundation in a sturdy independent manner, like a gentleman of the old school, corpulent and self,

sustained, not like the lath and plaster tenements of to-day, that stand up in rows like ricketty dandies and seem only kept from falling by clinging together. Then there were many garden-plots, interposing their green and trellised areas between the dwelling-houses, and not a breeze swept over the city that did not stir many a clump of foliage in its cool and fragrant path.

Not claiming to belong to the limited and ignoble class of *laudatores temporis acti*, I cannot rely implicitly upon the statements of those old world people who declare that every thing is changed for the worse; that Bostonians have degenerated in character and talent, that the march of intellect is a retrograde movement, temperance and railroads glaring humbugs and morality extinct. Perhaps the circumstances we have undertaken to relate, and which are founded on a train of events that actually occurred in this city and its environs, may tend to shake the opinion of those who believe that the crimes of licentiousness are entirely an offspring of the present day, and were unknown in Boston thirty years ago.

So much by way of preface. Let us go back then, thirty years or more. It is a fine April day; the sky is soft and misty, and the sultry sunshine sheds a subdued and silvery brilliancy upon the city. It is the hour of high noon, and Washington Street is full of fashionable promenaders. Ladies, lovely and brilliant as the day itself, are gliding and fluttering along in costumes hovering between the heavy richness of winter and the airy elegance of spring. Plumes nod and silks rustle. You observe, my dear madam, that the waists are very brief, the upper portion of the gown comprising only a space of three or four inches. In the contour of the figure we miss the universal graceful curve imparted to the ulterior profile now by one of the most extraordinary inventions of the present day whereby an artificial *embonpoint* deceives the eye agreeably. The fashions of the date to which I refer were not lenitive to personal deficiency and deformity. The leaders of the *ton* must have been women of surpassing loveliness and grace. But here comes a dandy. Dandies have existed from time immemorial and flourished alike in despotisms and republics; in savage life and civilized society. The dandy of to-day is excruciatingly severe upon the Beau Brummels of thirty years ago; while they, could they have foreseen the monstrosities of their descendants, would have held up their hands in holy horror, and exclaimed with all the gentle vehemence of which a dandy is, on great occasions, capable:—*Geud Gad!*"

But *revenons a nos moulons*. Here comes a dandy, as we said a paragraph or two back. His hat is not a D'Orsay; nor is it a shocking bad one. Bell-tops have not yet been projected and modesty has presided over the model. We shall not enlarge upon the article. Very elaborately ruffled and very carefully 'got up' is the linen of that bosom, not, we will venture to say, an independent article of dress, but a veritable portion of a very useful and characteristic garbment. The white cravat is very succinct and laconic in its tie. The vest is white, with longitudinal black stripes, but surely it must be owing to some extraordinary dearth of vestings that it is made so short as barely to support three diminutive buttons placed in fearful contiguity to each other! But no dearth of cassimeres, by this hand! The nether garments of our friend extend from his chin to his heels and cling as closely as his epidermis, seemingly as if he had put them on when he was a little boy, and they had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength from infant 'shorts' to full grown 'tights.' Their color is a light French blue.—The coat with its loose lappel is very short before, and marvellously long behind, garnished with bright metallic buttons of formidable magnitude.—From one of the posterior pockets hangs a handkerchief of crimson silk by so small a portion of one corner that the spectator who walks behind the dandy lives in constant expectation of its falling on the *trottoir*. Fear not,

anxious philanthropist, it is 'pinned in.' The gentleman, for so slender a made youth, has marvellously well shaped and manly limbs methinks. His calves and femoral muscles are wonderfully developed—a Ganymede in face and chest—a Hercules in his legs! There is some mystery about this. If you referred to his hosier you would obtain a solution of the problem.—That gentleman would tell you that the secret lay in the composition of the stockings and pantaloons; that the artificers of these articles of dress were inspired artists, and that they made changes and allowances in their creations in obedience to circumstances, following implicitly the hints of Lord Foppington to his hosier:—'You should always remember, Mr. Hôsier, that if you make a nobleman's spring-legs as robust as his winter calves, you commit a monstrous impropriety, and make no allowance for the fatigue of the winter.' The costume of our exquisite was completed by a pair of tasseled boots glittering with jet and encircling the lower part of his limbs with many a resplendent wrinkle. We have been somewhat minute in our delineation as we intend the picture for a faithful likeness of an excruciating lady-killer of his day. Hundreds of articles, constructed upon the same principles, are promenading up and down with the regularity and stiffness of automata. Here and there might be seen, too, young fellows and girls from the country, the former in homespun, walking hand in hand, in couples, and gazing, open-eyed and open-mouthed upon the belles and beaux, the shop-windows, and the sign-boards. Some are armed with blocks of gingerbread, and eat as they ramble—a terror to the passing dames in silk and satin. We will be sworn these 'rustic juveniles,' and bucolic beauties put up either at the Lamb Tavern or the Green Dragon.

Ah! here comes a beauty indeed! What a glorious complexion! The rose and lily blend together in her cheeks. What magnificent orbs are shaded by her long dark lashes; and how richly that damask rose glows amid the clustering black curls that shade her Parian brow. The lady on whom similar encomiums were appropriately bestowed by the Washington street promenaders, was worthy of the sort of enthusiasm she inspired.—Her lovely countenance wore a peculiarly frank and guileless expression: her dark blue dress showed by its style that the fair wearer was one of those who scorn to sacrifice the grace of nature on the shrine of fashion; it was admirably fitted to display, though not ostentatiously, the charms of a well formed and full figure. The lady has apparently hardly reached her twentieth year. She was evidently one who moved in the highest circles, for her proud and easy bearing, and her 'thorough bred' step, so free, fearless and graceful, were sufficient evidences of familiarity with the walks of high life. The dandies eyed her with admiration, while their insolence was checked by the commanding expression of her lovely countenance. Even the women could not refrain from whispered acknowledgements of her loveliness and grace. How low and deferentially did those gentlemen who recognised, salute her. No lady of the age of chivalry ever commanded more obsequious homage from the plumed Paladins of sunny France. We shall follow her past the Old South, wait while she does a little shopping, glide with her over the side-walks, Corn-hill, ascend with her to Pemberton's Hill, and pursue her steps down Hanover street.

Nothing occurred to interrupt her promenade until, in the street last mentioned, an old woman bent with age, but still retaining an appearance of much vigor, carrying a staff, decently clad, and wearing a short red cloak upon her shoulders, halted directly in front of the lady, and exclaimed, 'Edith Vernon!'

'Why Mrs. Henderson?' exclaimed the young lady; 'I am glad to see you; I have missed you for many a day. I saw you last in the country, and I little expected to find you here.'

'Perhaps you'll be sorry to hear that I've been well, and doing well, and making money, and want no more alms from rich folks.'

'How can you say so, Judith,' said Miss Vernon reproachfully. 'Why should I be sorry to hear of your doing well?'

'Why, I never know'd any of you gentle folks,' muttered the old woman, 'that didn't like to keep poor folks under. Ye give alms—crumbs from your abundance, pennies from purses that are too dainty to keep any thing but gold, and you think to bind us forever by your *charity*, umph!'

'Come, come, Judith,' said the young lady; 'this is idle. You ought not to harbor thoughts like these. I am glad to hear of your good fortune.—Tell me what you are doing and where you live.'

'I live hard by here. Perhaps you are too proud to come and see me, but yet some gentle folks as proud and grand as you be, Edith Vernon, are glad enough to get a word from the old woman in her den. And that reminds me of a merry saying of my poor old man—he's dead now. He was the sexton of his parish, and he one day came to see one of the big bugs about some church business or 'nother, I forget rightly what it was now. The man's wife was one of these here high-flying things, dressed out all the time in sunday clothes—who but she? and she took it in her to tax my husband for walking into the parlor instead of waiting in the entry. "Madam," said my old man, "I have come into the parlors and the bed-rooms of as fine ladies as yourself, and when I've went away, I've carried 'em out of their houses feet foremost." Ha! ha! she didn't like poor folks to come to her house, and she said she wouldn't go into theirs; but she lies in a house more narrer and dark and damp than any saller in Broad street.'

Edith Vernon took little notice of the waywardness and asperity of the old woman, perhaps because she was accustomed to it, or because she believed, with the majority of people, that domestic afflictions and a long course of hardship had partially affected the brain of the sufferer. Finding her disposed to a long and energetic lecture in the street, Edith consented to accompany her to her residence, the more readily as she was really anxious to see how the old woman fared.

Mrs. Henderson led the way to an old two story wooden house, and turned off at right angles into a narrow paved yard, which led to the main door of the building. She ushered the young lady into a parlor at the right of the entry, furnished with heavy old mahogany chairs, wainscotted with wood, and having a large rambling fire-place, surrounded with little earthen tiles containing scriptural and fancy subjects. On a table in the centre of the room lay a pack of cards, beside some china tea cups, and a few heavily bound volumes. An old and almost hairless grey cat was prowling and wheezing about the room; but Edith started back involuntarily when she saw reclining at full length, on a rug before the fire—a very large one for the season, the athletic figure of a young man of nineteen.

'It's only my nephew,' said the old woman apologetically. 'Dick Darrel—he's simple, you know. He loves to sleep before the fire, like a dog—poor fellow.' She called the sleeping youth by name, and touched him with her staff, a proceeding which elicited a low tiger-like snarl. 'Dick! get up—that's a good boy; your aunt has brought a nice young lady to see you. You remember Miss Vernon?'

The idiot, or maniac, for he was one or the other, very deliberately raised himself to a sitting posture, passed his fingers through his hair, and without raising his eyes, laughed and muttered to himself, 'why did you come and drive him away? He comes to me when I'm alone, lying down by the fire, but when you come he slips away, and I lose the chance.'

'What are you talking about!' said the old woman sharply.

'About him—the dark haired man,' answered the idiot through his closed teeth.

'Hush! hush!'

'I won't hush! you're always spoiling my chance. You talk about revenge, and you won't let me do it; I had him just now, so nice—he was lying down and I was kneeling on his breast, with one hand on his throat—the other—the other, aunt—held that bright bladed knife you gave me the other day—tut, pshaw, he's gone now.'

'Is he always in this unhappy frame of mind?' asked Edith in a low tone.

Before the old woman could reply the boy had bounded to his feet, and sprang to her side, bending his dark eyes upon her countenance.

'Don't be scared,' said he, as Edith shrank in terror from the earnestness of his gaze; I wouldn't hurt you—only him—I daresn't tell who, *she* won't let me.'

'Do you remember me?' asked Edith with a faint smile.

'Remember you?—yes I do,' said the boy. 'Your name is Edith Vernon. You brought us money and meat and drink, out in the woods yonder. And poor Dick knows the voice as he did the robin's that said "good morning" to him every day, up in the green oak yonder. Then we went down by the brook in the meadow, and Dick waded in the water to pluck the flowers for the pretty lady; the first blue flower from the side of the grey stone in the woods was her's, up yonder. It was sunshine all the time—up yonder. But a long black shadow came stealing over the grass, and the dark haired man came into the woods with his gun. I heard the noise and saw the blue smoke curl up among the trees. The next day there was no robin in the green oak, up yonder.' He clenched his hand, knit his brow, stamped his foot as he said this.

'He seems to bear a grudge against some person,' said Edith to Mrs. Henderson, 'for having, as he supposed, killed one of his familiar wild-wood birds.'

'And well he may,' said the old woman bitterly; 'for a sweeter bird than ever sang in the green-wood, was slain by the man he means. And a fairer flower than ever grew in the forest was plucked from its home, and rifted of its sweets and flung away by him. A curse upon his head; the curse of a broken-hearted woman, and a motherless boy.'

'That's right, curse away, aunty,' said the idiot, 'I love to hear an old woman swear.'

'Silence, fool!' said the old woman.

'Really,' said Miss Vernon, rising, 'this is too unpleasant. I cannot stay to hear such language, and witness such passion.'

'Oh, I crave your pardon, madam,' said the old woman ironically. 'We will be careful not to offend your ladyship again. Dick, we must save our curses. You asked me, Miss Vernon, what I was doing. There are the tools of my trade upon the table—I read fortunes in the cards.'

A half contemptuous smile curled the roseate lips of Miss Vernon.

'You laugh, Miss Vernon,' said the sorceress, 'many a proud one has done the same, who has lived to acknowledge in tears the truth of my sayings. I tell you—you yourself are in danger—in danger from a dark-haired, dark complexioned man. He has the tongue of a serpent. Shall I tell you more?'

'Go on,' said Edith with a smile.

'That fair hand wears a ring, the emblem of a plighted troth,

The words have been spoken,—
The vow shall be broken.'

'Broken! and by whom?' exclaimed Miss Vernon, almost blushing at the interest she felt.

'Not by the lover. He is true and trustful. You shall be forsworn.'

Edith smiled contemptuously.

'Yes, you shall be forsworn, Edith Vernon. Deceiver and deceived you shall rue in tears the hour of your falsehood and your folly; but all in vain—

'Your guilty love you may not smother,
For him—almost, if not your brother;
No wife—no maid—but yet a mother!'

Dark burned the flush upon the cheek of Edith Vernon. She sprang to her feet and moved to the door.

'Woman!' said she sternly, 'this insolence is intolerable. I came to you as a friend, and you insult me grossly. I shall not expose myself to a repetition of this malice.'

"The truth may be blamed, but cannot be shamed," replied the old woman in a harsh voice. 'Me and mine knowed that long ago. We have sinned and suffered. I meant you no malice, Edith Vernon—you are stiff-necked to turn on me in that fashion. Fore-warned—forearmed. See if you can fight agin fate, try it—it would be great to succeed. But till you've wiped it out by life and death, the fortune runs just as I told you,—

'Your guilty love you may not smother,
For him—almost, if not your brother;
No wife—no maid—but yet a mother.'

The door closed upon the crone, and Edith Vernon, with a throbbing heart and flushed countenance regained the street and wended her way homeward with a rapid step.

CHAPTER II.

A FOREST SCENE. EDITH IN PERIL. A WILD HUNTSMAN. A NEW FEATURE OF CHARACTER DEVELOPED. JUDITH ONCE MORE ON THE SCENE. A CONVERSATION. A STORY OF SEDUCTION.

Thy heart was glad in maiden glee,
But he it loved so fervently,
Was faithless all the while;
I hate him for the vow he spoke,
I hate him for the vow he broke. Fraud.

It is the privilege of the novelist and dramatist, in the brotherhood of Art to change their scene and *locale* as often as convenience or imagination lists. At the prompter's whistle, or the author's viewless signal, a street disappears, a forest rises in its place. The transition, however, is generally more successful in the romance, than the theatre, for, in the former all is left to the imagination, to whose power nothing is impossible, while in the latter the illusion is frequently destroyed by accident, a tardy chair remaining in a forest, or a stately oak persisting in displaying its broad branches in a monarch's palace.

Adopting, then, the usage and phraseology of the drama, and borrowing the playbill formula, let us premise that 'a lapse of some months is supposed to intervene between the first and second chapters.' The scene to which we would now, in the plenitude of our magical power, transport our readers, is a charming chestnut wood in the heart of a rural township some ten miles from Boston. Spring has passed away, and the 'green and bowery summer' holds imperial reign o'er field and flood and forest. All around, the umbrageous trees lift their graceful crowns of foliage into the golden sunshine, bright and powerful as young giants. Beneath, the even grass and velvet moss, are kept soft and bright by the tiny rills that here and there trickle from grey and lichen-covered rocks. If you bend your eye steadily along the silver thread of one of these minute water-courses, you may chance to see a quail or partridge, the colors of his plumage blending with the tints of the underbrush, or the fallen leaves of last year, shyly dipping his bill in the element to qualify his noon-day meal. The hum and buzz of the insect tribe drowsily pervade the forest; but the heat is tempered by the cool breeze that at intervals sweeps through its green glades, fluttering the foliage, and bending the delicate wild wood flowers, that are sprinkled over the mossy carpeting.

In a little clearing in the heart of the wood, through which a cart-path passed, just wide enough for the sunshine to form a fair circle on the grass, on a block of granite, squared by the hand of nature, beside a little runlet that gushed from a dark moss-grown pile of rock, sat Edith Vernon. If this beautiful girl appeared to advantage in the gay metropolis, still brighter did her loveliness beam forth, set like a picture in the dark frame-work of the sylvan wood. Her bonnet was off—and the coquettish wind lifted her radiant curls from her snowy neck, and toyed seductively with the gauze kerchief that rested on her bosom. With her hands locked, and resting listlessly upon her lap, the fair girl seemed lost in a reverie, whether painful or pleasant it would have been impossible to guess, for her features were

calm and impressive. She was roused from her reverie by a sudden rush, and noise among the leaves. A heron, startled from the brink of the stream where it flowed a few feet below the rock on which Edith sat, had taken wing and flew low, and directly over her head. As the dark shadow of the huge bird fell upon her white dress, the sharp report of a gun was heard, a bullet whistled by her ear and buried itself in the bark of the very trunk against which she leaned. Overpowered by a sense of peril, she uttered a faint cry, and sank down senseless upon the rock. The sportsman who had fired the shot, rushed through the trees to the spot. It was Dick Darrell. He was dressed neatly in a shooting frock of green, and wore a black velvet cap. His game-bag was suspended by an Indian belt, fancifully embroidered and adorned with beads and porcupine's quills. His shooting apparatus was new and brilliant, and in his hand he carried a short rifle. He uttered a shrill cry when he saw Edith stretched before him.

'I have killed the pretty lady!' muttered he flinging his gun upon the grass: he knelt down beside her and placed his hand instinctively upon her heart. A faint fluttering replied to the pressure of his fingers. Dipping his hand in the cool runlet he sprinkled the brow of Edith with the peerless element, the influence of which speedily revived her. Her bosom heaved, the color returned to her cheeks, she opened her dark eyes, and comprehended at once her situation and the cause.

'Hurrah!' said the boy, 'Edith Vernon lives again.'

'You came near killing me, Richard,' said the young lady.

'If Dick had harmed you' said the youth; 'they would never have hung him for it. Dick knows how the old crazy man at Milton Bridge killed himself. He put the muzzle of his gun to his head, and touched the trigger with his foot. That sent him to sleep, and he never awoke again. He sleeps under the big stone yonder.'

'But you used to love the birds, Dick, what makes you go out to shoot them?'

'Other folks shoot "em"' said the lad, moodily. 'Why should'n't I do as other folks do? that's what old aunty says. So she gave me this gun to make a man of me. And the village boys dares'n't laugh at me now as they used to. I can shoot as well as any of 'em. There's a smart chance 'of birds here, and I take my pick. Some folks uses shot—I shoot with single ball. I love to shoot the crows—they look like the ministers, with their fine black shiny coats. They fly high in air; and they ain't afraid of shot—but I can take 'em on the wing—and then their fine black feathers are all dabbled with the red blood.'

'Poor things!'

'I used to say so myself. I like to see 'em die now. I shot a hawk yesterday.'

'Indeed!'

'Oh! yes! he was rising with a partridge in his claws. Dick wanted the partridge for old aunty's dinner. So I raised the rifle steady, steady, crack! down he came tumbling from the clouds. The ball had broken his wing. He dropped the partridge, and flew at me. But I put the gun on his throat, and squeezed it till his eyeballs started out and he died, Edith Vernon! I thought that hawk was the dark-haired man, and I laughed when he died.'

'Who is this dark-haired man, Dick?'

'Hush!' said the boy, looking carefully round. 'I'm most afraid to tell you. If old aunty should hear me she'd be mad—and take my gun away—and my pretty belt, and shut me up in the house. But you are pretty and kind to me—I love you—but I hate the dark-haired man.'

'Who is he?'

'Colonel Miles Forester.'

'My sister's husband! Why Richard, he is a good man.'

'Aunt calls him a bad man.'

'He is kind to all around him.'

'Not to Dick. He threatened to horsewhip Dick for shooting birds in his orchard, and called me an idiot. Let him take care that Dick doesn't go a shooting after larger game. Dick can shoot a black-bird on the wing; is it harder to shoot a man?'

'Hush! hush! never dream of such things as these.'

'But I do dream of 'em, and they make me feel cross and ugly; but not when I'm near you, Edith Vernon. You never call me fool and idiot—nor laugh and make faces at me. Shall I tell you how you come to me when I'm asleep?'

'No—no.'

'Yes—yes—I must tell you. You come to me smiling and looking as lovely as you do now. And your lips look so red and tempting—I can't help flinging my arms around you and kissing you. I can't help it now, Edith Vernon, for I love you.'

Edith started to her feet in a new terror. The wild boy flew to her side, wound his arm round her waist, and clasped her to his breast; his large, fierce eyes gazed directly into hers—she felt his breath upon her cheek, his lips were about to be pressed to hers, she uttered a scream and struggled to disengage herself.

'Dick Darrell! fool! take that, and quit!' shouted a harsh voice. The boy sprang backward under the influence of a sharp blow inflicted by a staff, and cowered like a dog, as he recognized the voice of his Aunt Judith.

'Let that larn you manners,' said the old woman. 'And now take up your traps and go home—home with you. Be quick now, if you don't want me to take your gun away.'

The idiot promptly obeyed, resumed his rifle without saying a word, and disappeared.

'That boy is getting troublesome and dangerous, Mrs. Henderson,' said Edith, her cheek flushing as she spoke. 'He should neither be allowed a gun, nor so much liberty. He has terrified me twice to-day—once by shooting so near me as to endanger my life, and the second time by offering the liberties you saw.'

'Umph!' said the old woman: 'and so I s'pose you'd spile all his sport because he don't know quite as much as some other folks. I've know'd simpler chaps than he get their livin's by their guns. And Dick's shooting is a mighty help to me. I hopes, Edith Vernon, you would not have him chained up in a poor-house, or a hospital, just because he made a little free with you. Many a gal would'nt a squawked at a kiss from a likely, hearty young fellow like Dick.'

'For shame, Judith. You forget yourself it speaking thus to me.'

'No I does'nt honey—I speaks my mind and axes no favors. And let me tell you, you could'nt coop Dick up. For if you was to swear he was foolish and dangerous, I could bring oath agin oath, till you was tired of that fun. But let that pass. How have you fared since last we met? Has the ill luck began to work?'

'No, Judith, I am well and happy in spite of all my ill-wishers. I am living now with my sister.'

'Right. The bride, I wish her joy,' said the old woman with a malignant grin. 'Much need has she of good wishes who marries Miles Forrester. And I suppose you like him too.'

'Surely; he is my sister's husband. He is kind to her—a brother to me. Besides, his reputation is the best.'

'A lawyer's reputation.'

'He stands well, not only at the bar, but in private. He is accomplished and agreeable.'

'Ha! ha! the net is spread. The decoy is fluttering. The bird will be in the meshes soon.'

'What do you mean?'

'Nothing—that's quick answered' said the old woman roughly and turning away. She looked back, however, and seeing a shade of sadness on the brow of Edith, paused, and added in a milder tone. 'You don't know the ways and wickedness of the world, yet, but you'll find 'em out too soon. I knowed a girl once, as fair and pretty and innocent as you be, Edith Vernon. She was much about your make, only she had golden hair and blue-eyes instead of them dark locks and sloe-black eyes of yourn. I thought she'd grow up to be a comfort to her mother, and be married off well, and make a happy wife and mother. But she was'nt a going to turn out so.—She went to Boston, and the next I heard on her, she was a ruined, guilty thing. She was a mother, but no wife, and she was living by the worst of means. She died in rags and wretchedness while her seducer was living in pomp and pride—a member of the legislature, a member of the church, a tip top gentleman and a very respectable man.'

'And what became of her mother?' asked Edith.

'She is alive still; though bowed down by suffering and shame

'And what sustains her in her troubles?'

—'The desire of REVENGE!'

CHAPTER III.

THE FORRESTER FAMILY. THE MANSION HOUSE AND LANDS. THE NUP-
TIAL NIGHT. CHANGE OF FEELING. THE MEERSCHAUM AND THE LIBRARY.
THE VIGIL OF LOVE.

Belvidere * * * I'll make this arm a pillow for thy head,
And, as thou sighing liest, and swell with sorrow,
Creep to thy bosom, pour the balm of love
Into thy soul, and kiss thee to thy rest ;
Then praise our God and watch thee till the morning.

Otway, Venice Preserved.

Miles Forrester was the descendant of one of the oldest and most respectable of the English colonial families, whose history, even in the mother country was not undistinguished or ignoble. The prominent members of this family had always been noted for their talent, and had enjoyed fortunes commensurate with their pretensions and ambition. Miles Forrester, to whom an allusion was made in the preceding chapter, possessed the hereditary talent, as well as vices of his race, and no small share of its worldly goods. In fact, the immense property of his father had been, at his death, divided equally between the two sons, Miles and Julian. Of these two young men, the former and the elder had from an early period, exhibited a commanding intellect, and an extraordinary promptness and decision of character, while his younger brother, with no small degree of ability, was unstable, yielding, and weak. But if Miles had many mental advantages, he suffered infinitely when his moral attributes were contrasted with those of Julian. While Miles pursued a favorite object with a zeal that suffered no abatement, when a moral obligation crossed his path, Julian was scrupulously conscientious in every action of his life. His nature revolted intuitively from the contemplation of an evil deed. Timid, gentle and reserved, he won little favor from the world. His native bashfulness was sometimes construed into coldness, even by those he loved best. Even towards his own brother this reserve was manifested. Frequently, when some unexpected kindness had been rendered him by Miles, and the latter anticipated at least the ordinary expressions of acknowledgement in return, Julian, after a struggle to master his emotions, would turn away silent, and misunderstood. But in solitude, his full heart would gush over. He could speak to the winds, the waters, and the silent stars, and the bright moon, what he could never utter in the ear of man. Brave thoughts, and brave words, were his in solitude—brave projects—but all vain and transitory as the rainbow tints that play upon the feathery clouds at sunset. Miles Forrester possessed in an eminent degree, the same poetical feelings as his brother, but in him they were not exclusively. 'Every thing by turns,' to use a hackneyed but necessary quotation, he was never the slave of any phase, of feeling, or particular pursuit. In his study he could turn from metaphysics to romance, from mathematics to poetry, at pleasure, yet while engaged in any investigation that alone claimed his entire attention for the time being. Conic sections and Spenserian stanzas were alternately his loves.—Then he revelled in solitude, with all the devotedness of Julian, yet no man loved better to be surrounded by a brilliant, social *coterie*. No more devoted or silent loiterer 'by hedgerow elms or hillock green,' yet none whose 'hip—hip—hurrah,' sounded louder in the dining-room among his boon companions. An admirer of virtue, a follower of pleasure—a hard

student, a confirmed idler; a man of lofty aims and a pertinacious trifler,—a sportsman and an artist, a student, yet possessed of first rate business talents, such was Miles Forester at the opening of our tale, recently married to Clara Vernon, sister of Edith, a charming and gentle girl, and residing on a beautiful estate in the village of B—— a few miles from Boston.

It is a pity that all cannot be house-builders. The residences of our population would then compose a complete index to its character and habits. You can learn more of the complexion of a man's mind and heart, by studying the build of his house and the fashion of his grounds a day, than by associating with himself a year. If this idea be correct, our readers will require no other apology for a brief and sketchy description of the house and territory of Miles Forester.

The latter comprised more than two hundred acres of land, embracing a great variety of surface, diversified not only by an alternation of woodland, tillage and pasturage, but by hill and dale, green meadow and flowing brook, rock and sward, hedge row and open space, scattered through all of which were trees of all sizes, and many species. Here were clumps of the graceful and feathery elm, there clusters of the glistening foliage of the walnut and oak. The flickering and dancing leaves of the white birch shot athwart masses of heavy hemlock and dark pine, that gave a green gloom to the woodland, even in midwinter. The external boundary of the estate was an ancient, but solid and moss-grown stone wall over which a close file of forest trees threw their green shadows in summer, and their orange foliage in autumn. On the inside of this wall and nearly level with its summit ran a winding path, dark with the pine shadows, and ruddy with their fallen leaves. A huge wooden gateway, with immense carved posts opened on an avenue leading from the highway to the mansion. The avenue was flanked by forest trees, and even in the noon of a summer day, wound its way to the house beneath a dense and impervious shade. The trees on either side were favorite haunts of forest birds who built their nests and reared their progeny within their branches undisturbed. Here the robin, or as glorious old Isaac Walton calls him the 'honest robin, that loves mankind both living and dead,' revelled in happiness from March to December, whistling from morning till night, or running up and down the avenue as if it were part and parcel of his own domain.

The house itself was worthy of such an introduction. It was a grand old wooden pile, with lumber enough to build a dozen modern villas. It was two stories in height, with Lutheran windows in the roof, quadrangular in form, with a shady court-yard, a fountain in the centre, and seemed an architectural *souvenir* of some quaint and antique Elizabethan mansion-house, in 'merrie England.' If the reader imagines he can form a tolerably correct idea of the building, he is very much mistaken, for invention had run riot in the original construction of the house and the subsequent additions or improvements, as they were courteously termed were equally *bizarre*. The original builder was a humorist, and his house must needs be full of little queer nooks, and out of the way hiding places, and unaccountable angles, and useless and disfiguring turrets, and quaint balustrades, and little peculiar windows, that peered forth like pursed up eyes, and huge door-ways, that confronted you like wide-mouthed grins. The eaves were great jutting protuberances that frowned over the face of the house like deep-drawn eyebrows, and flung their heavy shadows far beneath.

Here and there on diverse pinnacles, were sundry martin-boxes that never had a tenant, and sundry weather-cocks that never felt the wind, but acted on the impulse of the currents of air that drew in all sorts of directions, and indicated an extraordinary commotion of the elements, continually. A huge archway gave entrance to the court-yard, in the centre of which a Triton blew (in summer) a tall and sparkling jet of water through

his winding shell. In winter, the water was drawn off, and the gold-fish removed from the basin to the conservatory, but the Triton sat here in uncomfortable nudity on a very sharp block of white marble with his shell to his lips all the year round. The house fronted on a wide lawn that descended in a gradual slope to the highway, the monotony of an even surface being obviated, by planting clusters of lilacs, and other flowering shrubs, and by cutting out little circles of turf, and planting bright-hued, and resplendent flowers in the spaces. The house was flanked on one side by the stable, a building contrived to be ornamental, and placed at a judicious distance, and on the other, by the green-house into which a long window of the drawing-room opened. In the rear of the house was a fine flower garden, full of summer-houses, labyrinthine paths, trellices and bowers. The mansion stood upon an eminence, and commanded a magnificent prospect. On one side, arose, over an intervening landscape of hill, vale, forest, meadow-road, and water-course, the picturesque profile of the good old town of Boston. Three fourths of the horizontal circle was formed by an amphitheatre of hills, some wooded, to their summits, and solitary, others green and smooth and dotted with white cottages, or patches of ploughed land. Several village spires could be counted in the distance. And through a fertile and picturesque valley, richly wooded and agreeably diversified, flowed in the hazy distance, the silver waters of the winding Charles, expanding in its course, and emerging from shade and seclusion, till it bared its broad and glowing bosom to the Kiss of the ocean.

Such was the aspect and such were the surrounding scenes of an old family residence. The grounds were beautiful and tastefully arranged, and if there was much of the grotesque and Gothic about the house itself, still redeeming traits preponderated, and there was nothing in it to merit the popular name bestowed upon it, and adopted by the whole surrounding country of 'Forrester's Folly.' Yet a nickname is oftener more enduring than an actual cognomen, and if an act of the legislature had made it penal to pronounce the irreverent title, the country people would still have spoken of 'the Folly.'

It was to this house, so quaint in external appearance, so commodious and elegantly furnished in the interior, that Miles Forrester had brought home his timid bride in the autumn preceding the commencement of our story. She had left her father's house in Boston, in the bridegroom's carriage. The night was dark and blustering. An old-fashioned north-east storm had been brewing for some days, and it broke forth in rain and tempest as the newly wedded pair set out for their home. Late as the season was, the thunder was heavy and pealed overhead incessantly, rolling away in the distance with the sound of gigantic battering trains upon a field of battle. As the carriage reached the open country, the violence of the storm was more apparent. Far away in the distance, the blue lightning revealed the turbid Charles tossed into short angry waves that ran before the wind like racers, while the heavy and incessant gusts dashed the rain in sheets against the carriage windows. But Miles Forrester recked little of the storm. He held his bride to his heart, and felt the throbbings of her own decrease in violence, as it felt his guardian pressure: but still it fluttered from a nameless terror, dear to him as the unseen, but felt crimson of her cheek,

'So sweet the blush of bashfulness.
Even pity scarce could wish it less.'

As the carriage rolled up the avenue, the huge branches of the trees, rendered heavy by the rain, were dashed angrily upon the top. But Miles Forrester knew not the omen, superstitious as he was, and a belief in omens was a weakness he acknowledged. He forgot that,

'Happy is the bride that the sun shines on,
Happy is the corpse that the rain rains on.'

If he felt any lurking gloom, the appearance of the old Folly would have dispelled it all. The servants were waiting to receive their mistress. From the hall and drawing-room a grand array of candles sent forth a blaze of light far into the storm without. Miles Forrester sprang from the carriage, and lifted his bride into the house. A shout of welcome and admiration broke spontaneously from the servants as they surveyed the sweet features, the graceful figure, and the dazzling dress of the bride.

'Welcome, Clara, to your home!' Thus did Miles Forrester bring home his bride.

Gayly and gallantly sped the hours of the honey-moon. Every thing the young bride saw, wore a charmed aspect to her enchanted eyes. Town-bred as she was, she never tired of rambling about with Miles, under the grand old forest trees, or galloping with him on the moon or sunlit paths of the wild-wood, or of sailing on the silver Charles, while her lover-bridegroom trimmed the sail, or pulled the oar. And he—his cup of pleasure seemed full.

'How happily the days of Thalaba went by.'

But a storm was brewing in the distance. In one brief month, many solitary habits were resumed, that Miles expected and intended should be broken up by marriage. A very magnificent meerschaum, a *souvenir* of Göttingen and Germany was taken down from a peg in the library where it had depended for a period of six weeks, and a servant had directions to furbish up the chain. A Greek smoking-cap was rummaged out. Also a pair of rifle pistols saw the light. And two pointer-dogs were driven nearly to the verge of insanity by the re-appearance of a game-bag, and a double-barrelled gun. The bridegroom was also observed to examine the joints of a patent fishing-rod, with some interest. And it was not long before he took the field in right-down earnest, having observed to his wife one morning at breakfast, after a musing fit of *bona fide* matrimonial silence that the sporting season would be over so soon, he believed he had better make the most of it, while it lasted. Having promised, upon his word of honor, in reference to her anxious warnings, to be careful of his gun, that he would not shoot himself if he could possibly help it, he added very benevolently, 'And my dear, if, in the course of the day, you should feel disposed to take an airing, the carriage and horses are at your service. Or if you prefer riding on horseback, John can go with you. *Au revoir.*'

And thus, with the most perfect ease, was broken the first link in that chain, which, a few days previously, the enamored bridegroom had believed was to bind him in willing servitude forever. Clara sighed, for woman's heart is a true barometer and foretells a change long before it comes.—When all seems sunshine and cloudless, the presaging shadow lies cold and heavy on it. 'But,' she fondly reasoned, 'if Miles gives up his days to fieldsports, his evenings, at least, are mine. He loves to sing to my accompaniment on the piano: or to his own guitar, love-ditties of his own composing, *en vers troubadour.*'

As these thoughts shot like a gleam of sunshine through her mind, she sat down to her piano, and placed upon the rack a sheet of manuscript. It was one of Miles's hastily sketched songs, and it lost nothing from the sweet voice, and graceful expression of the singer.

CLARA'S SONG.

Thou'rt mine—thou art mine—
Thou hast sworn at the altar—
I knew in the trial
Thy heart will not falter.

As dew to the flower
 The fount to the river ;
 Thy love to my heart shall be
 Ever and ever.

Like the love-star at morning
 Thou'rt bright to my eyes ;
 In my heart like a mirror
 Thy radiance lies.
 As the dew fills the flower,
 The fount fills the river,
 Thy love fills the heart
 That shall bless thee forever.

Who would not give a dukedom for one hour of Titian's skill to paint her as she sits there in pleasant reverie, her blue eyes suffused with tenderness, her sunny locks clustering round her fair brow, and neck and shoulders, her tiny white hands clasped together with the rose-tipped fingers interlaced.—How fairy-like her graceful figure ! But hold ! the sunshine that streams about her is interrupted by a dark shadow that crosses the floor and intrudes upon her figure, and, projecting that dark shadow, stands Miles Forrester without. The next moment she was folded in her husband's arms.

'How nobly you look,' said the fond bride, gazing upward into the dark eyes of her husband. And never was truer word spoken. Miles was a tall athletic person cast in the truest mould of manly beauty. His step and carriage were firm and free. His forehead was high and broad, and his features were bold and expressive. Swarthy in complexion, his clustering hair was of the darkest dye, and his eyes were of dazzling brilliancy. His lips were red and full, and a smile was habitual to them. The most practised observer would have failed to augur anything sinister in the character of a man so handsome and prepossessing in exterior.

A happy evening followed the meeting we have just remarked upon.—Such were the gleams of sunshine that broke upon the forebodings of the parties, like the false lights that sometimes checquer the course of a storm. But these happy evenings were destined to be not many in number as the months rolled on. Miles grew weary of reading novels and love poetry to his wife in French and English, and regretted the necessity of resuming his German authors because it would necessarily banish him to his library, since Clara did not understand the language, and he could not study in the same room with another person unless both were engaged on the same subject. So the library and the meerschaum became the successful rivals of the lady. Miles Forrester was somewhat mystical in many of his ideas and his present studies were not at all of a practical nature. And when he attempted to apply some of his speculations, the results were unpropitious.

For a long time he resisted the idea that he was becoming indifferent to the charms and attachment of his wife, but at length the conviction forced itself upon his mind. And here let us do him justice. No selfish regret took possession of him when he made what he called the startling discovery of the state of his feelings, and he honorably resolved to keep his companion in ignorance, if possible, of the change that had come upon him.—The sequel will show how well he persevered. At first, he was very much shocked, but by degrees he became accustomed to his position. He still loved Clara—but not with the whole ardor of his nature—not with the warmth, the devotion, the enthusiasm that he felt he was capable of bestowing upon the woman who should realize his conceptions of feminine perfection.

It was night—or rather morning, for the student's lamp had burned steadily for several hours, and Miles reclined on the sofa of his library, weary

with reading. His meerschaum was in his hand, and the smoke-wreaths curled upward from his lip in voluminous profusion.

'It cannot be concealed' said he with a sigh. 'She is not what I require; and what is worse, there exists the woman who is all, aye, all that my ideal represents. Oh! Edith! what infatuation took possession of me when I passed thee by, and took thy sister's hand? Glorious as the morning—radiant as the starry night is thy queenly and commanding beauty. Poor Clara! she loves me—her soul is mine, and she tries to sympathize with me with all her might. But she cannot fathom the soul of Miles Forrester, its depths of tenderness—its stormy gulphs of passion—its dazzling aspirations—its studious toil. Edith! with thee how proud would our existence be! Our minds would take the wings of the morning, and soar over the illimitable universe. We would revive in science, the crushed, condemned and prohibited truths that yet await the seeker. Oh! glorious woman, thou art lost to me forever. Lost! yes, legally—but so lost entirely? That admits a doubt; and hope and daring climb by a doubt to success. But what am I dreaming of? One would think your German legend were true, and that at this dark hour of the morning the evil spirits were abroad seeking the mastery of those who refuse to yield their bodies to repose, or sleep unguarded by the flower and the cross. My eyelids are growing heavy—I won't disturb poor Clara though.'

He flung himself at length upon the sofa, and soon fell sound asleep. At daylight he awoke. A slight weight was on his neck. It was the hand of his wife. She lay on the floor, her head resting on his breast, and her arm around his neck. Fearing her husband was unwell, she had sought the library to chide him for sitting up so late, but finding him asleep, she sat down beside the sofa noiselessly, to watch for his awakening. But exhausted nature forbade the voluntary task—she fell asleep, his name upon her lips, his image in her heart, her arm about his neck. Cold she was, as marble, for the fire had gone out, and she wore a thin night-dress. Yet never had she seemed so lovely in the eyes of her husband. He watched the regular undulations of her white bosom, and the flow of her dark hair with the eye of a lover. At last he woke her with a kiss, and bore her back to her apartment. Yet nothing could restore the old sunshine of his love and there was a vacuum in his affections! Was the void to be filled by a forbidden image?

The first summer after the marriage of Miles Forrester, brought with it a visit from Edith Vernon. Her sister received her with unaffected delight. Miles dared not give way to his emotions, and her sisterly salutation burned like a brand upon his cheek. He was at the hall door when she alighted and his hand was the first she touched. Thus stand the characters whose destinies the Fates are weaving. An idiot boy, with vague ideas of sensuality and vengeance floating in his brain, cowers beneath the staff of an old and wrinkled woldame full of nameless purposes. Higher up in life, a young wife, who adores her husband, sighs to think that the enchantment of the nuptial hour cannot last forever—he is mourning the divorce of the Actual from the Ideal, and half shudderingly weaves from his Imagination a poisoned garment for a living victim. Is her heart untouched, unsunned? Far away roves a wanderer to sunny lands. But the smile of Edith is a brighter sunshine to his heart than all the Heaven of Italy can boast. Thus stand the group of mortals unconscious of the speed with which the dark river of fate is rising to the wheel on which they rest. One moment—and it

MOVING.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FALL OF EDITH.

Oh! weep for the hour,
When to Eveleen's bower,
The lord of the valley with false vows came.

Moore.

And now the spell began to work. Miles Forrester loved Edith; if the passionate devotion of every waking and sleeping thought; if admiration of the intellect and person merit the name of love—guilty though it were. Yet he sought not to win her by the usual arts of the libertine seducer. He sought not to shake her religious faith—to attract her vanity, to excite her love of pleasure. He was content to spread before her the mazes of his own wild heart and brain—to pour into her willing ear his strange and startling fancies, to seek her companionship in all his studies and his wanderings. And Edith Vernon trod fearlessly and in good faith the path that was marked out for her. She viewed with Miles the splendid panorama of the starry heavens, and when the lights of science failed or wearied them, they recurred to that mystical and fascinating lore that intimately blends the history of man with the celestial bodies, and makes of the stars the burning alphabets with which the Fates inscribe unalterable destinies upon the wall of Heaven. And so far did they pursue their speculations that while they curled the lip at the dicta of Astrology, they half believed its teachings. That strange science, too, that rests upon the doctrine of sympathy, was investigated with credulity and wonder. Imagination lent it triumphs and mysterious results. So much for the studies they pursued in unison. They rode out together often on horseback, frequently accompanied by Clara. They rambled over hill and dale together, botanizing and sketching: and a thousand signs—a thousand sighs—glances—flushings of the cheek, and faltering words told the guilty husband that the subtle links he had woven were around his victim.

Edith loved him—with his brother's token on her hand—his brother's letters in her bosom—her heart flew to him only, as the arrow to the target. And a wild and guilty pride—a flush of unnatural joy and exultation thrilled through his soul and irradiated his countenance at the idea. He had never breathed his passion, yet she was his. He prolonged the refined sensuality of gazing on her, fluttering and struggling like the wild bird in the magic thrall of the serpent. And Edith—she hung over the abyss of ruin, charmed and incapable of action. The wave that threatened to receive her might dash beneath, but its voice was music. When lone she strove to shake off the subtle influence of Miles, but when alone she was never more completely in subjection to it. Then it was that his mind—the remembrance of his words, his burning thoughts, exerted their fullest and fellest power. But did Clara suspect nothing, fear nothing from the intimacy of her sister and her husband? Alas! she was too pure herself to suspect impurity in those she loved. She adored her husband—she knew Edith to be guileless, and with the fatal credulity of her sex, she fondly believed that Miles loved the sister for the sake of the wife. She saw in his brotherly attachment to Edith a new link to bind him to his home and she rejoiced at

its existence. Thus the path of Forrester's intrigue was smoothed before him.

It was a cool September night. Miles sat musing in his library over a wood fire, which the premature sharpness of the season rendered comfortable. Edith had left him about an hour and retired to her chamber.—Should he follow her thither? His heart throbbed wildly as the guilty thought occurred to him. Already had the shadow of his passion crossed her soul—already he felt, had she conquered the first repulsive struggles of alarmed virtue. The Evil Spirit urged that this alone was crime! that the irrevocable step had been already taken. Miles arose and moved forward to the door—but he stopped suddenly—cold drops of perspiration stood upon his brow—his hair rose—his eyes assumed a ghastly stare! for conjured up by his powerful imagination, there stood between him and the door, a pale spectral female figure, whose long dark hair fell over her white dress, while her mournful eyes looked into his very soul.

'What want you with me?' he muttered—'have they buried you so badly that you can't rest quiet? Begone! this is no place for the dead.' He bent his eyes keenly on the phantom and it vanished.

'Ha! ha!' he laughed in a hollow tone—'they little know me if they think to deter me from my purposes by getting up these optical delusions!'

He staggered feebly to a cupboard and unlocked it, and took forth a bottle, and a huge glass goblet of the make of the old Flemings. Into this he poured nearly a pint of wine and drank it a gasp, muttering 'to Edith Vernon!' as he raised it to his lips. Once more he moved to the door, but paused again as if some new horror had crossed his path. He passed his hand across his eyes and laughed once more wildly and hoarsely.

'Ha! ha! my mother! She's been dead long enough to belong to the grave. What breaks up her rest to-night? No matter! if a legion of the dead and damned stood in my pathway I'd break through them all! He pushed open the door and passed swiftly but noiselessly along the dark and silent corridor.

* * * * *

It was a fitting bower for a lady fair the chamber in which Edith Vernon slept when she tarried at the Folly. The deep embayed window-place was furnished with a casement set with diamond-panes, and looking to the east so that the first faint streaks of day were sure to dawn upon the sleeper.—The floor was richly carpeted so that the naked foot of Beauty might fall upon it as noiseless as a snow-flake. A magnificent toilet table stood against the wall, and in a niche near the curtained casement an immense mirror whose perfectly plane surface, without stain or blemish, made a brilliant picture of the image it reflected. In a corresponding niche stood the sculptured groupe of Cupid and Psyche, immortal in their marble loves. Over the rich French bed curtains, white as virgin purity, hung their transparent folds. And here lay Edith Vernon, in her first deep sleep. A shaded lamp, placed upon the toilette-table, half defined her figure. Her cheek was pillowed on a snowy arm, and her clustering tresses lay dark and glossy on her neck and the white bosom that rose and fell with the regular respiration. Sleep on! young dreamer! Let your visions to the last be those of purity and peace. Thy destiny is written and thy doom is sealed.

The door opened—into this paradise of innocence the Evil Spirit stole.—Into the nest of the sleeping bird the serpent wound his way—Miles Forrester stood within the maiden's chamber! He closed the door behind him. Cautious Guilt turned the key that Conscious Innocence forgot. A dark shadow fell upon the bosom of the sleeper. Miles Forrester! pause—reflect—repent! Thou standest beneath thine own roof-tree and the sleeper is thy guest—thy sister—doubly thy sister, since she is the betrothed bride

of thy brother. The dark shadow moved not from the sleeper's bosom.—She woke—she bounded to the floor—but Miles Forrester caught her in his arms and kissed her into silence.

'Oh! leave me! leave me!' said the wretched girl.

'Edith Vernon!' answered Forrester, 'you are mine! Leave you? I tell you to-night that the grave has given up its dead to wave me back—but they have threatened me in vain. Be mine! Edith! you *are* mine!'

'Release me! I am plighted to another. Release me! Would you have me wrong my sister? Would you have me wrong your brother!'

'Edith you have wronged him already. You have dared to love and in the eye of God you are already guilty!'

'Release me! Give me time to repent. Do not curse me beyond redemption. Nay! unhand me, or I will call for help.'

'Be it so,' said the seducer. 'Miles Forrester will never stoop so low as to enforce submission to his will.' He folded his arms upon his bosom:—
'Farewell, Edith, I will leave you. Henceforth, I will strive to banish your dear image from my heart—but if madness or death should supervene, pardon me and pity me. Let us triumph over nature—let us pine apart in withering despair—cursed ourselves and cursing all that love us, and call it chastity and virtue—but let us not lay to our souls the flattering unction in the thought that we are guiltless! Edith farewell!'

He waved his hand. The die had been cast. As the wild wave dashes down the precipice, as the doomed ship dives to the vortex of the maelstrom, as the falling stars shoot madly from the zenith, with a smothered cry, in which joy, delirium, despair, and devotion were all blended, the lost girl sprang into his arms and hugged her destroyer to her very heart!

CHAPTER V

THE COTTAGE OF THE CRONE. AN IMPORTANT INTERVIEW. A TALE OF WOE AND SEDUCTION IN HUMBLE LIFE. THE CONFESSION. INTRIGUES. TRIUMPH OF DECEPTION.

‘Oh treble woe,
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Deprived thee of.

Hamlet.

It is a received opinion that the commission of any secret crime by one not inured to iniquity, brands upon the countenance of the offender some indication of guilt;—that the features wear a trace which the experienced eye can readily detect; but how far from being universally true this idea is, the memory of almost every one bears witness. Even the inevitable suffering entailed upon sin frequently fails of showing itself in the exterior. The writhing criminal often walks abroad with the serenity of a mind at ease, and the bloom of bodily health impressed upon his face and form.—The false bride often goes to the nuptial chamber with as innocent a blush as the maiden just awakened to the power of love. The secret adulterer may even hold his head up in the pulpit—nay, the very murderer may move in the social circle unsuspected and caressed. Edith Vernon, after her fall, was to all appearances as innocent as ever. Her fatal beauty never faded, and her step was as free as in the earliest days of youthful guiltlessness.—And Miles Forrester betrayed no token.

So months rolled away, and though concealment became to the guilty girl every day a greater effort, still it was successful. Mental woe and physical suffering were borne without a murmur. She was gayest among the gay—most cheerful among the cheerful. Her hilarity and buoyancy of spirit were attributed by her friends to an anticipation of a speedy meeting with her lover. So deceitful are appearances—so false the wisdom of the world! * * * * *

Months had rolled away. It was late on an evening of May; and a lamp burned low upon a table in a poorly furnished room in the cottage of old Judith Henderson. The residence of this singular and forlorn being stood in a remote and wild spot a mile or two from Forrester's Folly—in a deep glen overhung with pine-trees, and surrounded by a rugged enclosure, which, as its cultivation depended principally upon the labors of Dick Darrell, yielded quite as many brambles and weeds as vegetables for the support of the old woman and her nephew.

The room in which the former kept her lonely vigils, for the boy retired at sunset to his fitful slumbers, was barely tenable, the house itself being old and rickety. There was some show of neatness in the arrangement of the few articles of household furniture, and the white curtains that screened the windows; but the floor was carpetless and the whole aspect of the room uncomfortable. The old woman sat rocking herself in a crazy high-backed chair, the glimmering light of the lamp throwing into picturesque relief the prominent and wrinkled features of her face, and the tresses of grey hair that escaped from her cap and fell over her bronzed and skinny neck. A pack of cards and a cracked tea-cup were on the table, flanked by a noseless pitcher which contained some beverage stronger than

water. Opposite to her, enveloped in a black shawl, with a cottage bonnet thrown back upon her shoulders, pale and agitated, sat Edith Vernon. The old woman filled her tea-cup.

'So you won't taste any of this heartening stuff?'

Edith shook her head contemptuously.

'Oh! you needn't turn up your nose at poor folks drinks,' said the crone.

'It does us as much good, I'm thinking, as the French drinks they has up at the Folly. It warms us when we're a cold—and raises us when we're down. If ever you gets to be as old as I be, you'll know what it is to have a friend in need.'

'I have known but few years,' answered Edith with a sigh, 'yet I am old enough to feel the value of a friend, however humble.'

The hag fixed her keen grey eyes upon the young girl, as she lifted the cup to her lips and drained it of its contents to the last drop. She then replaced the cup without changing the direction of her gaze, and indulged in a low and malignant chuckle.

'No! no! it can't have come to that yet. Edith Vernon in want of a friend! What's become of all the big-bugs that you keep company with in town and at the Folly? Where be the fine young gentlemen that are ready to fetch and carry for you like Spaniel whelps—and swears that your eyes are like the bonny blinking stars above, and your lips like the red roses under foot? But clouds comes over the stars, I'm thinking, and it's vain to look for the roses of December—and hearts can't feed on flattery—but breaks in spite of soft words and fair promises.'

Edith repeated mournfully:—'I am in sad want of a friend.'

Her gentleness seemed to touch a chord of sympathy in the breast even of her hostess.

'Has it come to this, indeed?' said she, more mildly. 'Has the hour come so soon? I read it in the cards—I saw it in the stars—I judged from the past—but little I know'd it could come so soon. And so you wanted a friend, young lady, and you come to me?'

'I came to you?'

'And what made you think I was fit to help you in your strait? The tender lamb don't use to seek out the old wolf—does it honey?' You've got a mother.'

'Yes—a mother,' answered Edith: 'but rather than seek her on the errand which brings me to you, I would be carried feet foremost to the village churchyard.'

'And your father lives?'

'Yes, but were I to hint a word of what I may impart to you, she would spurn me from his door-step. Hear me. I once heard you speak feelingly of a ruined girl. It was in my hour of pride and joyousness—and I forgot it for a while—but in the period of sore trial the remembrance of those words came back upon me. I looked around me. Of those who should be my confidants and friends, there was none to succor me; and so I came to you. You spoke kindly of a ruined girl—and, God of Heaven! what is Edith Vernon now herself?'

'And through whose means?'

'Hush! I have told you nothing as yet.'

'Be silent, Edith Vernon—it is my time to speak. That ruined girl was my own—my only child. I wasn't always the morose, remorseless, deformed, evil speakin', evil-thinkin, evil-seekin' creetur I am now, Miss Vernon. Times was when I was as young and fair as you be. I married the man of my heart, long time ago, and heaven blessed me with a daughter. When the old man was took away, she was a great comfort to me, for she grew up pretty, and smart and industrious. My poor husband had spent a sight of care and money on her, and the minister and schoolmaster had took fancy to her, and taught her eeny-most everything; so that her larnin' was

quite a wonder in the town. She was but a young thing when she took a notion to go up to Boston, and get her own livin', and her mother's perhaps—for she hated to see me work so hard—by teachin' school or paintin' pictures, or some other genteel business of that kind; and I didn't oppose her much, though I set such a store by her; for I could no more think of any body harmin' or misleadin' her, than of tryin' to harm one of the angels of God's Heaven. For a spell things went pretty well. She got employment and sent me money, and come to see me once or twice, and said she was fixin' things so's to have me down to Boston 'long with her. Arter a while she sent me more money, a heap more, but she came no more herself. So I went up in the stage to see her. But she had left her boardin' place, and I couldn't find out where she'd gone to. Then I began to mistrust that somethin' had happened to her. As I was wanderin' about the streets forlorn and wretched, I see a carriage stop at a shop door and a fine lady get out of it and go into a store in Washington Street. It was my daughter! I folloed her in and called her by name. She saw her old mother—but she didn't answer. No! she turned as pale as a sheet—rushed past me—told the driver to be off as hard as he could go. I staggered onto the sidewalk! I fell sick! my brain swam! I grew blind and swooned away! When I came to, I found the woman in the store sprinklin' me with water and rubbin' my hands. I tried hard to blind their eyes! I said I'd only had a fit I was subject to, and picked up my bundle and walked out into the streets. It was a bright sunshiny day, but everything looked dark as midnight to my eyes. I don't rightly remember how I found my way to the stage office in Elm Street, but I did and rode home. I lived in a town a good ways off, on the Providence turnpike. I saw everything that had happened at a glance. I saw that she was a ruined lost girl, and it pretty nigh drove me out of my senses. In fact, I sometimes think, Edith Vernon, that I havn't been exactly right in my mind from that day to this. I went about my housework, day after day, solitary and in a maze like. Sometimes I'd sit down and cry by the hour together. Sometimes I'd come across her school-books, and some of the pictures she'd draw'd out with Inj ink; or her little girlish playthings, and then I'd think my heart would break. I never thought I should set my eyes on her again. But she came back. Well aday! She was a sad sight. Her hair was all specked with grey—and she was thin as death, and her beauty gone. She was more poorly clad than her old mother. Poor thing! she trembled like a snared rabbit, as if her heart would bound out of her poor frail body. She thought I'd drive her away! She little know'd her mother's heart. I never kissed or hugged her half so much when she was a little innocent child as I did then—a ruined, wretched thing. And why? there was no one else to care for her. And she told me her story—never naming her seducer, and trying to make me think less hardly of him—curse him! that he deserved. But she bore beneath her bosom an unborn witness of his crime, and she told me, how he, that fiend in human shape, had induced her to take pisonous drugs to destroy all consequences. Them drugs was killin' of her inch by inch; and she came home, to bring to light an idiot boy, and to die in her old mother's arms, praying for mercy on him who had no mercy on her.

Edith's tears flowed freely at this tragic story, and a few drops started to the eye of the narrator, but she dashed them angrily away, and filling her cup again drank its contents at a draught. Then, rising, she went to an old cupboard which she opened, and rummaging awhile upon a shelf, produced a sheet of paper which she handed to Edith.

'Read it,' said she: 'my eyes are old and bleared, yours are young and keen as yet. They are some verses writ by my daughter a few days before her death.'

Edith grasped the paper with a trembling hand and read with tearful eyes the following:

TO THE NAMELESS ONE.

Farewell ! farewell ! a few short hours,
Will place me where I've wished to be,
Beneath the churchyard grass and flowers,
Far, far from thee.

Farewell ! farewell ! when shines the star
Of evening over land and sea,
Sometimes thou'lt think of one who's far,
Far, far from thee.

I would not, love, have been thy bride,
And brought thee shame and misery,
Nor live to know thy love denied,
Far, far from thee.

One nobler born shall bear thy name,
And share thy heart so proud and free,
When I have lain my love and shame
Far, far from thee.

Farewell ! methinks 'tis sweet to lie
Beneath the shadowy churchyard tree,
For thee, and love of thee, to die
But not—so far from thee.

'She never told his name,' said the old woman ; 'but there was a scrap or two of paper that I found in her bosom when I laid her out, that made me suspicion who it was. I could prove nothing---I can prove nothing now. The big-bugs always destroys safely. They risks nothing. But the man---the father of yonder simpleton---was a man of the highest respectability in Boston. He was young too---one of them whose hearts is hardened to stone before their bodies is to manhood. I got a sight of him---alone---and I put that scrap of poetry in his hand---it was sweet to see him read it---it was *crucifixion to him* ! I charged the crime upon him---but he confronted me and abused me, and drove me away. I could prove nothing ! ha ! ha ! I could prove nothing. Years have passed, and though he knows me not, I have an eagle eye upon him. And now, young madam, who do you think this villain was ?'

Edith was silent.

'Miles Forrester ?'

With a loud scream Edith fainted and fell from her chair. It was long before she recovered. When she did so, the old crone discovered that the pangs of premature maternity were on her. It was in that awful hour of suffering and shame that a confession was made, on the promise of entire secrecy, to ears that had once listened to such a tale from the lips of a misguided daughter. Judith promised, by the memory of her own lost child, and for the sake of those to whom Edith stood in the same relation, to use her utmost endeavor to shield her reputation from utter ruin. Word was despatched to Miles Forrester at the Folly that Miss Vernon had had a sudden attack of illness at the cottage. The family physician was summoned thither ; he pronounced the symptoms febrile, and advised her non-removal for a day. After a lapse of some days Edith was conveyed to the residence of her sister, whose own severe indisposition at that time precluded her personal superintendence. Thus for a while, chance, money and intrigue contrived to throw a veil over the consequences of guilt and guilty passion. In the dark womb of the future what revelations lie concealed ?

CHAPTER VI.

A NIGHT SCENE. THE SEDUCER AND HIS VICTIM. EDITH'S GLOOMY HOPES.
THE BETRAYED WIFE.

Oh! limed soul that struggling to be free,
Art more engaged. *Hamlet*

And now the spring has passed—the 'green and bowery summer,' has blessed hill, vale and woodland with its sunny smile, for the unvarying march of the season halts not for human guilt, or human woe. On a calm midsummer eve Miles Forrester sat in his library—with Edith Vernon for his companion. The mellow lustre of the shaded lamp falls upon manly beauty and feminine loveliness—upon books, pictures, busts—all the elegancies of graceful literary ease, while, through the upper portions of the arched windows the cool breeze comes from the moonlit tree tops, laden with the fresh fragrance of the woodlands. High in mid heaven the bent bow of the queen of night glitters in the firmament. Is this the home of guilt? Are those the features of the sinful? Look closer. Edith Vernon's beauty is not that of former years. Forrester's expression is little changed. There is a wild lustre in the girl's eye, a flushing color in her cheek. The sparkle and the bloom are born of the wine-cup. On the table stands a slender-necked bottle, flanked by two tall glasses. The tempter proffers the cup—the victim accepts it. Such is the fatal downward tendency of guilt; Edith resorted to artificial stimulant to supply the place of that buoyancy of spirit which departed with her maiden purity and truth. Far enough removed from all danger of intemperance, she was yet reckless enough to pledge her companion as often as he lifted the glass to his own parched lips.

Edith glanced at the casement. A tear sparkled in her dark eye:—

'Tell me, Miles,' said she sorrowfully: 'Is there not a silent reproach in the calm aspect of yonder unclouded sky? Is it not the image of that serenity of mind and conscience we have lost forever? How bright the gates of Heaven appear to her against whom they are forever closed.'

'This is folly, dearest,' answered Miles Forrester; 'midsummer madness. All nature, beaming, bright and beautiful, teaches us to love: we have but obeyed its behest.'

'Melancholy sophistry!' sighed the lost girl: 'it teaches us not to sin. Look again at that bright sky.'

'I do—and in it I see, dimmed by the effulgence of the moon, the stars in their accustomed places. Have we not read their love? have we not fulfilled the destiny their glorious alphabet presaged?'

'With the poetry of feeling—the brilliant credulity of the astrologer has passed away from me' said Edith. 'I am broad awake. I dream no more. Yes—there is one dream I hug to my very heart.'

'And what, dearest, is that dream?' asked Miles, earnestly, as he wound his arm around her unresisting form, placed one hand amid her dark tresses and gazed into her wildly-flashing eyes.

'Her lips nearly touched his cheek—her heart throbbed against his own.'

'I will tell you,' she whispered hoarsely; 'in yonder chamber—on a sick bed—lies one you never should have married—yet who claims you for her own. What if she should never rise!'

The cheek of Miles Forrester was blanched with a sudden paleness.

'Tell me,' continued Edith, 'what if she should never rise?'

'You startle—you alarm me.'

'Listen to me, Miles Forrester. While that woman lives, I am thine—body and soul. When she dies—you are mine. Ha! ha! I see all before me fairly. Fill up! I am in wild spirits to-night. Fill us! you will not fail to pledge—your second wife.'

With a strange laugh Edith filled a goblet, pressed it to his lips and gave it, almost brimming to the hand of Forrester. With eyes riveted upon his companion he drank it off. Yet even under the spell of her fascination, he trembled and wondered. It seemed as if their positions had been changed. Instead of the bold, brilliant, and plausible seducer, he seemed now the victim—timid, spell-bound, powerless; while she, strangely excited, and wildly exultant, seemed another and a stranger being one of the *Diræ* in the form of a Siren—lovely as an angel, yet terrible and irresistible as fate.—He would have spoken, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. She continued:—

'You shall not say after this that I am no prophetess. I can read the future, and I will impart to you my knowledge. I see a funeral train. Its winding march is scarce performed—the gates of death are scarcely closed—before, lo! a blaze of hymenial torches, revelry and rejoicing in the late house of mourning.

The funeral baked meats

But coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.

This is a stale quotation. Mark me—if my sister dies—then you will marry me—will you not? my boy, my dear boy—I shall see him again—and we shall be—'

'Happy? never, Edith, never! Perish the word upon our lips! If she, or our poor invalid should die—justice should not be denied you. But surely, your intellect wanders if you look forward with eager anticipation to such an event. Yes, yes, sin and sorrow have bewildered you, for a moment at least, or you would never welcome an escape from sorrow—from shame my care has already spared you, by the death of your noble, your true-hearted sister, my own wronged Clara.'

Edith sank back in her chair and covered her face with her hands to hide its expression from the keen scrutiny of her companion. It was evident that she felt his reproaches and regretted the expressions prompted by a momentary delirium.

'Let us look calmly at our position' continued Forrester. Clara will live—even you wouldn't have it otherwise. Your lover will return—Julian, who adores you. He is impatient for the arrival of the period when he can claim your hand—all his letters are full of you. You shall marry him.—There is no fool so blind as a lover. He will suspect nothing. As for the boy the offspring of sin and shame, let him live or die, what is it to me or you?

It was now Edith's turn to reproach. 'Everything!' she answered boldly, uncovering her face, and looking sternly at her betrayer. 'He is our child—guilty though our union be, he shall not suffer from its influence. And even if shame, degradation and ruin should be the consequence, I should watch over him with the foudest care. But that I know he is now in good hands, I would this moment sever every tie that binds me to society and become a wanderer for his sake. And what do you propose to me? A deeper sin and shame than any I have yet committed! Would you have me deceive the trusting, the noble-hearted Julian? man! man! what do you think me—when you propose that I, stained and steeped in guilt, should plight my troth to him, before the altar. My bridal garments would palsy my limbs, my bridal vow would paralyze my tongue, if I dared the villainess

you so calmly mention. And you; do you wish another victim? Is not the wrecked honor of a wife and a maid enough—must your brother fall before you? No, no; would you not have me despise you—never use this language to me again. I am not fallen so low even yet as to be compelled to listen to it.'

'Really—you are eloquent to-night,' said Miles, sneeringly, as he arose and lit a chamber-candle. 'Well, Miss Vernon, I have duties to perform—I am a husband, and I must watch over the troubled slumbers of an invalid wife. I leave you either to calm your mind by meditation and reading, or to go to bed—the latter I advise you—and so—pleasant dreams.'

He left her.

'Her death or mine!' muttered Edith, as she prepared to retire 'alone can give me repose. Why should I wish her to live on, bereft of the love that was pledged her by the false one. He cannot love her still, nor would his heart yearn towards her, if her life were prolonged to an old age, while towards me, in spite of his wayward words, the tide of his affection swells resistlessly. If she were out of the way, I might then look for happiness. Yes, if Miles were once my own, mine only, in spite of conscience here, and the hereafter beyond the grave, I should be happy.'

Leaving Edith in her reveries, let us follow Forrester to his chamber. He found Clara sleeping, but restless, flushed and tossing in a fever fit. Her half-opened eyes glanced wildly to and fro. Yet her dreams were not dreams of pain, for he caught a word or two of her favorite song, one he had himself written :

Thou'rt mine—thou art mine—
Thou hast sworn at the altar,
I know in the trial
Thy heart will not falter.

'Poor Clara' thought he, as he lightly kissed her fevered cheek; 'these words are indeed delusive. The faith pledged at the altar has been violated; the heart, promised to thee, has proved recreant, though no sore trial tempted. I have sinned against thee, poor innocent. I am fairly immersed in the fatal web my own passions have woven. Rightly am I punished by this present misery.'

CHAPTER VII.

THE APOTHECARY.

'I do remember an Apothecary.' *Romeo and Juliet.*

The village of B— being a remarkably healthy, honest and peaceful place, was not blessed by the residence of a doctor, an apothecary, or a lawyer until long after the date of its incorporation. These blessings, however, incidental to the march of civilization, came in due process of time. A Godsend of an epidemic established a son of Esculapius, a batch of quarrels, and a score of trespasses led to the erection of a lawyer's shingle, while in the train of the former came an apothecary.

Vincent Verjuice hired an old wooden tenement in the heart of the village, facing the Red Bull Tavern, though on the opposite side of the green, and converted the lower story into a repository of drugs. At the time of the commencement of our story he had been established in business many years, and the gilded pestle and mortar, over his door, the admiration of the village youngsters, had been deeply bronzed by the hand of Father Time.— Let none of our city readers, familiar with the gorgeous establishments that grace our Tremont Row, and Washington street, imagine that Vincent Verjuice's shop bore the slightest resemblance to these. Let them rather picture dingy windows, a low door, dirty bottles, an uneven counter, a rickety floor, and other features in keeping with these. And the *Genius loci*; the dispenser of senna and salts, let us dwell a moment upon his personal appearance and characteristics.

He was some forty years of age or over, about the middl size and corpulent, though his flesh was cadaverous in hue, and unstable in texture. His hair was grizzled and sparse. Ragged and lowering eyebrows, gave him a sinister expression. His mouth had a sardonic curl which alone relieved its sensuality. His upper lip was discolored by the constant use of snuff, an article which was gratuitously dispensed with every dose he sold, though never mentioned in the prescriptions, and not until after it had gratified his own olfactory organs. The external appendages of the latter derived a purplish hue rather from the copious libations of gin indulged in by Mr. Verjuice, than from the blood of the festive grape. When we add that Mr. V. was attired habitually in rusty black, wore a tight white neckcloth, had a rusty rumbling voice, rubbed his chin with his left hand while speaking, and subsisted entirely upon the aforesaid gin, and onions, we feel that we have conveyed as good an idea of the man as our pen and ink is capable of expressing.

The kitchen, parlor, and dormitory of this worthy gentleman, who was, unfortunately for posterity, a bachelor, were all comprised in the room over the store; but he was not the sole tenant of the building. No; bending over the pestle and mortar, or crawling forth on sundry errands, by day, or crouched upon a rug before the stove at night, like a dog, might be seen a poor crippled being, half man, half boy, the *factotum* of Dr. Verjuice. The age of this creature, Humphrey Wilson, might have been sixteen or thirty, yet he was too slight of figure for the latter age, and should have been too sad of heart for the former. His spine was affected by a curvature, and one

of his legs was shorter than the other. Hence the use of a crutch was unavoidable. His thin, wan countenance expressed both mental and bodily pain, yet it was mild, and far from unprepossessing, and rendered interesting, from the evident effort at cheerfulness the lad was constantly trying to assume. He felt that under good treatment and moderately propitious circumstances, the poor creature would have been happy and radiant. Grateful he was to a fault, and in that Verjuice afforded him a shelter, a rug, poor clothes, and coarse food, he would have toiled from morn till evening, yea, until midnight unrepiningly, could he only have heard an occasional kind word from his master, or been exempt from the coarse, practical jokes which formed almost the only species of humor the doctor ever indulged in. As it was, he toiled incessantly, but he could no help losing heart occasionally.

Poor Humphrey was born to misfortune. His mother died in giving him birth, and his father, a poor and sickly laboring man following his partner soon after to the grave, the child was left in the care of an aged grandmother, who officiated as a nurse, and eked out her scanty earnings by cultivating a small patch of arable land attached to the hut she lived in, with her own hands. Though she was devotedly attached to the poor orphan, he saw but little of her, as her avocations necessarily took her away from home a great deal, and he was left a solitary tenant of the cottage, at a period when most children are the objects of the most tender care. His, therefore, was a joyless childhood. The little world of Boyhood was a sealed book to him, he had no playmates, and he grew old beyond his years. The children of the poor are obliged to shift for themselves at an early period, and Humphrey was accordingly but a little lad when he limped along with his old grandmother from the old hut to the village of B— a distance of three miles with all his goods tied up in a very small parcel, and was left in the charge of the worthy Dr. Verjuice, who agreed, in consideration of the trifling services the orphan could render him, to repay him by providing with paternal care for his 'education, food, lodging, clothes, and pocket money.'

Children are proverbially physiognomists, and though Dr. Verjuice assured both Humphrey and his grandmother that 'he was very fond of children—and doated upon little boys' in particular, the lad's eyes filled with tears, and his mind with forebodings as he watched the receding form of his grandmother, who looked back on him with many a fond farewell, as she slowly walked away from the village of B—.

Doctor V. soon shone forth in his true colors. A hard task-master, a passionate and unreasonable man in or out of his cups, he seemed the very incarnation of evil. No holidays for poor Humphrey! It was only by dint of doing double work, and after the most humble supplications, that he was permitted to pay a quarterly visit to his dear old grandmother, and when she finally fell ill the hand of total strangers smoothed her pillow. As we prefer the dramatic to the narrative form, we shall transcribe a conversation between the doctor and his assistant.

One day Verjuice returned to the shop from one of his numerous visits to the Red Bull at about 1 o'clock P. M., having added to his dinner of excellent onions (he preferred the vegetable in its raw state) a copious draught of Hollands.

Little Humphrey was seated on a stool by the stove, his elbows resting on his knees, his face hid in his hands, and weeping bitterly. His crutch lay against the counter. This the doctor possessed himself of, and approaching the boy on inaudible tip-toes, tapped him, not gingerly, but viciously, upon the head.

'Hullo! young gentleman,' said the doctor, as the boy looked up, terror striving with grief, 'what has induced you to neglect my strict orders con-

cerning the washing of that gross of phials for the more sentimental occupation of washing your own cheeks, white enough already, with salt tears? If you can give any reason why I shouldn't wallop you with your own walking-pin, I should be extremely indebted to you, young gentleman, if you'd be kind enough to let me hear it.'

'Please, sir,' stammered out the boy, 'beat me if you please—but afterwards pray grant me one favor.'

'Umph! let's hear first, what it is.'

'Oh! sir, dear sir, let me go home this afternoon.'

'This is your home.'

'Oh! sir, to where I used to live.'

'Shan't do any such thing!'

'Oh! sir, pray sir, please sir.'

'What do you want to go for?'

'Oh! sir, my grandmother is dead, and I want to go to her funeral.'

'What the h—ll do you care about your grandmother? go to work, boy: go to work.'

Pleasant, kind! good-hearted gentleman!

There were times when a sense of friendlessness and wrong wrought up the poor boy almost to the verge of desperation, when he would pore over the *Materia Medica* and read about subtle and life-destroying poisons till his eyes nearly started out of his head. At such times he eyed wistfully the box containing arsenic, or the jar of prussic acid, and the letters *pul. opii*. had a sort of fascination for him. More than once, at such times he opened one of the cases, and smelt, handled, nay, on one occasion *tasted* a poisonous drug, because he thought it would be delicious to lay down on his rug, never more to awaken in this world, never more to ply his unwearying crutch, never more to see the glowering face of Verjuice, but in place of it the pleasant countenances of his departed kindred, looking love upon him. But these were passing thoughts, for Humphrey was a good and pious lad, and his testament lay ever close to his heart. It had once belonged to his unseen mother, and he conned it late and early, nor did Verjuice dare deprive him of it, or forbid him its perusal. And from that volume came the glorious light of truth and hope and penetrated the dark corners of the orphan's heart, and there were times when his spirit soared away from the narrow and filthy shop, and he seemed to be a plumed angel, wandering with his mother in the Elysian light of Heaven.

Once or twice a vague hope of escape flashed across the mind of Humphrey. Could he not run away? Poor boy—his crippled limb forbade resort to the prompt refuge of ill-treated youth. How he envied the wild, strong-winged birds that cleaved the bright air in a freedom totally unknown to him. But might he not escape from thralldom, with the consent of his master? If the latter really valued his services, would he so invariably treat him with asperity. He might be glad, Humphrey thought, in the simplicity of his soul, to supply his place by a more active lad. Perhaps it was only respect for his pledges to his deceased relative that induced him to bear with his infirmities. Buoyed up by notions like these, he one day broached the subject to his master, as the latter sat brooding over the stove, with a short pipe in his mouth, enjoying his meridian whiff of smoke.

'Please sir,' said the boy, blushing and trembling violently.

'What do you want?' asked Verjuice gruffly, as he blew a broad stream of odorous smoke from either nostril, looking on his assistant as amiably as the 'Paint King' on his victim.

'Please sir, I have had some thoughts of leaving this shop.'

'Leaving this shop! Leaving the gill pestle and mortar, kept by Vincent Verjuice, M. D. by courtesy, where the best assortment of family drugs and

medicines are kept constantly on hand, retailed at 20 per cent less than at any other country drug store in the state or out of it, prescriptions put up with the utmost fidelity and care—by night or day—where you are lodged, clothed and fed in the best manner, (at the cheapest rate) and live on from year to year, in hopes of pocket money? I wish you may get it!" puff! puff! puff!

'I know all that, sir, I know you're very kind—but—but—'

'But what?' growled Verjuice.

'Please sir, I find the work too hard for me.'

'Umph! go to work, boy; go to work.'

'But sh—'

'What's the use of talking to me? You know you can't leave the gilt Pestle and Mortar, where family medicines &c.—without the consent of Vincent Verjuice, Esq. M. D. by courtesy, &c. &c.'

'I know it, sir; but *with* your consent; and the boy clasped his hands imploringly.

Verjuice looked at him with his bleared eyes a moment or two intently, removing his pipe, and letting the smoke ascend, that he might have an uninterrupted view of the thin, haggard countenance turned on his with a look of mingled anxiety, terror and hope. An indescribable kind of smile with the grim and bloated lips of Verjuice, and as he turned his head away and resumed his pipe, the irregular jets of smoke that issued from the bowl thereof, might have convinced a keen observer that Mr. Vincent Verjuice was chuckling mightily in the conception of some exquisitely pleasant idea—that is, as exquisitely pleasant as any that ever issued from the gin-glowing alembic of his brain. After a few moments' silent and chuckling reverie he again turned his regards upon Humphrey. The poor, simple lad thought he had never seen his master look so radiant and pleasant, and drew the most favorable auguries from the expression of his countenance.

'Well, young gentleman,' said the doctor, 'what should you say if, instead of opposing any obstacle to the gratification of your wishes;—if, instead of making any effort to retain your valuable services, I should consent to your departure, and even facilitate it?'

'Oh! sir, I should be so grateful!'

'Umph! you would—would you? And pray, young gentleman, supposing my consent gained, where would you go to?'

The boy's face brightened up, and he fearlessly disclosed his little plans for the future to his master.

'Please sir, the apothecary at Newton has just lost his boy by typhus. I know he wants a new one. I saw him here the other day, when you were gone, and he was speaking of it, sir, and I told him perhaps—oh! pray don't be angry with me for saying so—I told him perhaps I might get your consent to leave here, and then he said, perhaps he might like to have me.'

Dr. Verjuice smiled grimly during the recital, and passed his hand slowly and caressingly to and fro across his bristly chin, uttering, in the meantime a low murmuring sound indicative of pleasure, something like the purring of a cat.

'Well, young gentleman,' said he, almost tenderly, and his voice, commonly as harsh as the sound of a file on a cross cut saw, was now modulated to the key of an ungreased cart-wheel, 'Well, young gentleman, what should you say if I should speak a good word for you at Newton?'

'Oh, sir, I should be so grateful.'

'Well, well, Humphrey, lad, get thee to the stable, and saddle old Bolus and I'll ride over there.'

Ten minutes could hardly have elapsed, before the animal alluded to, was waiting at the door, snapping viciously at Humphrey as he held the

bridle, and making one or two attempts at treading on his lame foot, for old Bolus was a cross-grained creature, and as sorry a specimen of the quadruped, as his master was of the biped race. He was full of practical jokes like Verjuice himself, and was never so elated as when he had succeeded in grinding his rider's leg against a sign-post, or the corner of a house; and whenever he had succeeded in unhorsing either Humphrey or the doctor, he would fairly whinny with delight.

Mounted on this Bucephalus, the doctor made the best of his way to Newton, on charitable thoughts intent! Alighting at his fellow-craftsman's shop, he entered into a casual conversation with the proprietor, and not until apparently on the eve of the departure, did he broach the actual object of his visit, at length he remarked carelessly:—

'Stopple, you want a boy, don't you?'

'Why, yes,' answered Dr. Stopple, 'I was looking after one.'

'Well, my boy is going to leave me, I won't say whether voluntarily or involuntary though!'

'Yes, I heard so. By the way, what sort of a boy is he; lame, I know—but active, for all that. He seems a kind, steady, intelligent lad.'

'Seems so' answered Verjuice, grinning: 'Umph, you always judge by appearances, don't you? They're never deceitful, are they? umph.'

'What do you mean? what's the matter with the boy?'

'Oh! Nothing, nothing, good morning; I'm in something of a hurry, I say nothing against Humphrey, but, hark ye, a boy that puts up aquafortis for paregoric and arsenic for white sugar, can't be so very valuable in an apothecary's store, eh? eh? good morning.'

Verjuice mounted his horse; but he made a feint of adjusting his stirrups and altering the length of his snaffle rein that he might have a chance of studying the countenance of Stopple through the bow-window of his shop. It was a perfect picture of simple horror—whiter than the contents of his drawer of *sach. alb.* Then the doctor cantered gaily back to B—.

Humphrey had stolen forth twenty times at least into the road to watch for his master's return, and he was ready to take the bridle the moment Verjuice drew up at the pestle and mortar.

'Well, young gentleman, it's all right,' said the doctor pleasantly, but severely, switching the legs of the boy with his riding-whip: 'tis all settled, and you're to go this afternoon.'

Humphrey was almost beside himself with joy; but he tenderly suppressed his emotions out of respect to the *feelings* of his master. He got together all his worldly goods and chattels (a smaller parcel than that which held them on his first arrival, answered) and prepared to take his leave.—The doctor had taken a few extra glasses of his favorite beverage and was duly qualified to make a scene.

'Humphrey' said he, squeezing the boy's hand so hard as nearly to dislocate it! 'I'm sorry to part with you, but heaven is my witness, it is none of my seeking. I would have been a father to you, and when I died, you would have come into possession of the Pestle and Mortar—Wilson late Verjuice. Think how that would have read upon the sign. No doubt you would dance on my coffin.'

'Oh, no, sir,' sobbed Humphrey.

'I beg your pardon, young gentleman. I forgot your shy pin. But, the will would pass for the ability.'

'Don't speak so, sir,' said Humphrey. 'Good bye sir. I wish you well with all my soul.'

'Umph! Quite likely.'

Humphrey shook his master's hand. A few maudlin tears fell from the lids of Verjuice.

EDITH VERNON.

The boy halted at the door, and a blush suffused his unusually wan and sickly countenance, as he said:

'Please, sir, I have no money. Can you give me a shilling for the stage fare?'

Had he obtained it, it would have been the only disbursement of pocket money the doctor had ever made on the score of his pledge to Humphrey's grandmother. But that obligation was destined to remain unfulfilled.

'No, no, Humphrey,' answered the doctor cheerfully, 'no money for stage fare. It's a splendid afternoon for walking.'

Humphrey cast his eyes upon his withered limb, and sighed. But it was only a momentary parry. He *could* walk. 'Good bye sir.'

'That's twice you've said it. But good bye. One moment, young gentleman. I shall supply your place immediately. So, if it isn't all right at Newton, it'll be no use for you to come limping back here again. I shan't recieve you.'

'Very well, sir.'

Humphrey limped away. Poor boy! He was not quite so light-hearted as he expected to be, on escaping from the Pestle and Mortar. He had conscientious doubts as to whether he was acting justly in quitting the guardianship to which his grandmother had consigned him. But the afternoon was bright, the sun shone cheerfully; and in that withered young heart there was still room for hope. Moreover, a farmer returning from the Boston market, gave Humphrey a cast as far as Newton Corner, and he had but a few steps from the apothecary's. He was about entering the door when Stopple sprang over the counter and barred his progress.

'What do you want here?' he almost shrieked.

'That situation!' stammered Humphrey aghast at his reception.

'Begone!' shouted Stopple, 'before I strike you. Dr. Verjuice has been here.'

'I know it, sir.'

'Then d—m your impudence; what do you mean by coming here yourself?'

'But sir—'

'Away with you! There's a customer coming. Don't set your evil eyes upon him;—oh! you little monster.'

Humphrey turned away almost broken-hearted. He was amazed, stupefied, thunderstruck. He wandered through the village with uncertain steps. Near a group of children just broke loose from school he paused; but they were not familiar with his figure, and thoughtless references to his infirmity deepened the gloom of his heart.

He wandered into the woods and under the shadows of an old oak tree sobbed himself to sleep. 'Kind nature's sweet restorer' dealt gently by him till daylight. But he was cold, damp and hungry. He picked a few berries and strolled about the woodland paths for hours, disconsolate and despairing. There was no hope for him but to return to his old master. Having adopted this resolution, he made the best of his way to B—, but he found no one to give him a lift upon the road, and several hours fled away before he reached his place of destination.

Verjuice he found standing behind his counter, but he received him as if he were a total stranger.

'Good evening sir, what can I serve you with? Anything in my line.'

'Oh, sir! don't you know me; dont you know poor Humphrey?'

Aha! young gentleman I crave your pardon. *Well, did you get that situation?'*

It was only after he had compelled Humphrey to go down on his knees and ask humbly to be taken back, and to receive pardon for his ingratitude

that the doctor made a show of reinstating him on his rug. But after this he worked him harder, and fed him worse, if possible, than before.

Such was Vincent Verjuice Esq. M. D. by courtesy whom we have thus fairly introduced to our readers. We do not claim for his character either respect or admiration.

CHAPTER VIII.

VINCENT VERJUICE HAS A CUSTOMER. THE APOTHECARY IN HIS ELEMENT.

Motto. Yes the Borgia have poisons which kill in a day, a month, or a year, at their pleasure. These be scurvy poisons which improve the wine, and make you pass the bottle with a greater zest. You think yourself drunk—you're a dead man. Or a man falls into a decline, his skin grows wrinkled, his eyes hollow, his hair white, and his teeth crumble on his food like glass. He no longer walks, he drags himself along; he breathes no more, he gasps;—laughs, sleeps no more but shivers in the sun at noon. A young man, he has the look of a dotard. He writhes along so for some months, and then he dies. He dies, and then it is remembered that six months or a year before, he took a glass of wine with one of the Borgia.

VICTOR HUGO, *Lucrece Borgia*, Act I, Partie II.

The apothecary's boy was sitting, late at night, in his master's store conning an old volume by the light of a flickering lamp, when an unwonted footstep caused him to look up. A man, whose countenance was concealed by a slouched cap, and his figure by a cloak, though the weather was still warm, was standing near the counter.

'Is the doctor in?' asked the stranger.

'No sir, but I can serve you' was the answer.

'That will not do; I must see him. Where is he?'

'At the Red Bull, I'm afraid---that is, I believe sir,' answered Humphrey.

'Run thither as fast as you can,' was the rejoinder, 'and whisper to him that a gentleman awaits him here.'

Humphrey started at once on his mission. In the bar-room of the tavern he found Dr. Verjuice engaged in discussing his fourth *magnum* of juniper-juice, entertaining a group of cattle dealers and rustics, mid-sips, with a very graphic description of a surgical operation which seemed to be relished by none but the narrator. Hastily swallowing the last drop of gin, and cutting short his amputation, with a promise to resume it at the earliest opportunity, he hastened to his shop where he found the stranger waiting.

'Can I speak with you alone?' asked the stranger.

'Certainly, sir, certainly. Humphrey, my interesting little friend, you can retire to the stable, and amuse yourself by chopping a hundred or so of straw for your four-legged friend Bolus, while I attend to business.' Humphrey silently withdrew. 'And now, sir,' added the doctor, 'what can I do for you?'

'Do you expect any more customers to-night?'

'Not that I know of.'

'Perhaps, then, you will have the kindness to close the shutters.'

There was something of command in the tone and air of the stranger, and Verjuice grumblingly complied with his evident wish. Returning, he motioned to a chair, and they seated themselves, the stranger with his back to the lamps, a hint that close scrutiny into his personal appearance was by no means so desirable to him as to the proprietor of the Pestle and Mortar.

'I am a stranger to you, Mr. Verjuice.'

'Never set my eyes upon your face before.'

'It is well. Now, sir, I wish to become a customer of yours. You in arsenic. I wish to obtain some.'

'For rats, I suppose,' muttered Verjuice.

'That is my business.'

'I beg your pardon, young gentleman, for young you seem to be by the

sound of your voice, but it is equally mine. Poisons are sometimes employed for human as well as brute subjects: and the law is very careful of the lives of its leiges. If it was't so, some folks might drive a thriving business—and the coffin maker and the sexton thank the apothecary. This country is getting over-populous. Umph! Have you got a physician's prescription?

'Here is my prescription,' answered the stranger, extending in a delicate white hand a net-work purse, through the meshes of which half a score of gold pieces glittered in the eyes of the apothecary. 'Do you recognize this authority?'

Verjuice cast a hurried glance around him. 'I want no other.'

'Give me what I seek' said the stranger, 'and this purse and its contents are yours.'

'My dear young gentleman,' said Verjuice, approaching his chair to that of his visitor, 'you are a scholar and a gentleman. Heaven is my witness that I am not hard-hearted. I ask no questions. If it lay with me, there should not be half the misery in the world that now exists. I know how painful it is to a young heir to contemplate his avuncular relative writhing on a sick bed in the protracted pains of a tedious disorder. If it was not for the law, with its d-----d paraphernalia of prison walls and patent drops, the avuncular relative of the supposed young gentleman should die in peace. I would anticipate the joys of widowhood. I would patronize courts of probate, rural cemeteries should flourish under my administration: and, if I only held the reins of power, I would abolish *post-mortem* examinations.—You see my heart is in your hand, read it.' Verjuice was eloquent. What a pity he was drunk!

'Enough, we understand each other, and now for the drug,' said the stranger, as he tossed the purse to Verjuice who instantly clutched and conveyed it to his pocket.

'My dear, my liberal young gentleman' said Verjuice tenderly, 'I can put you up something better than that. Arsenic; pooh! Its a vulgar venom totally beneath the notice of a gentleman and scholar. Harkee! I've passed a good deal of time in chemical experiments. Science, my dear sir, has been almost the only amusement of my solitary life. Men think me dissipated and idle—because I have my moments of relaxation. Malice, sir. When I'm smoking or drinking I'm all the while pondering over some prodigious problem in the mystery of nature.'

'To the point, sir, to the point.'

'All in good time, my excellent young friend. And among other things I have amused myself with this same matter of concocting poisons. I have arrived at results. Ah! if I had only lived in the time of the Borgia I might have been a wealthy man. But this age, and this country afford no encouragement for the fine arts.'

Thus saying, Verjuice mounted to a top shelf by a rickety step-ladder, and taking therefrom a small vial, placed it in the hands of his customer.

'There, sir, is a first-rate article' said he, with a glow of professional pleasure, 'the contents of that phial would stiffen a Hercules in an hour. Lessen the dose, he might linger for a month or two; but a teaspoonful sooner or later would kill him. A boy in this neighborhood who used to show some kindness to my lad Humphrey, fell sick, and on his death-bed bequeathed him a little dog that had been his favorite playmate. Humphrey set all the world by him, but the march of science does'n't halt for puppy-dogs. I gave the animal a few drops of this mixture while Humphrey was gone on an errand. He was absent only a few minutes, but when he came back ha! ha! the dog was dead. I thought Humphrey would have gone into fits, and I believe he would, if I had'n't have flogged him soundly, the tender-hearted booby!'

EDITH VERNON.

The stranger rose and moved towards the door. At the threshold he halted, and addressing the apothecary in a low, but clear voice, said,

‘Endeavor, if you can, sir, to forget our interview to-night. A bad memory sometimes earns a golden remembrance. And, of one thing be sure, if I find you making any attempt to dog my steps, or discover any clew, you shall dearly repent making the effort. If you recall our meeting to-night dismiss it as a dream.’ He left the store, closing the door behind him.

‘Very queer!’ muttered Verjuice, ‘some devilry in the wind, I reckon. But what’s that to me? there’s no fear of detection. They can’t tell where he got his poison. Besides, they may post-mortem-ize, and analyze as much as they please, they’d be none the wiser for it. Arsenic indeed! The fellow had no conception of the resources of science. The ignorance of some people is truly astonishing. Here, Humphrey; rascal!’ he added calling to the boy, ‘Come in and go to your rug. But keep one eye open. I’m going over to the Red Bull. I don’t feel very well to-night. I think a glass of gin would benefit me.’

CHAPTER IX.

THE RETURN. THE FAITHFUL LOVE AND THE FALSE ONE. DISSIMULATION. THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

Home : home ; at last, Alphonso. There they shine,
The old ancestral bulwarks, in the rays
Of the declining sun.

ERNEST SARGENT, *Volcano*.

No sojourner in New England can have failed to be impressed with the beauty of the first days of autumn—those September days when the tints of the foliage are mellowed, as the hues of a picture are by time, when the air is cool and pure, yet soft and gentle, and the overarching sky spreads in unclouded brilliancy, 'deeply, darkly blue' and brilliantly transparent. It was in weather like this, on the noon of a sunny day, that Mrs. Forrester, newly risen from her bed of sickness, walked forth into the garden of the Folly, to breathe the balmy and inspiring air. She was supported on one side by her husband, on the other by her sister, tenderly by both. Her recent sufferings, so piously and courageously borne, and the love and devotion to himself manifested through all the phases of her sickness, had won back the heart of Forrester. Edith too, had apparently repented of the guilty hopes in which she had indulged. Her eyes once more reflected back the affection that beamed from her sister's orbs. With simulated gaiety she sought to cheer the convalescent, and though, to the keen eye of Forrester, her ringing laugh had a certain tone in it that reminded him of 'sweet bells jangled out of tune,' still it deceived the unsuspicious Clara.

'You are gay to-day, dear Edith,' said she.

'And why should I not be?' answered Edith. 'Is it not enough to make one merry to see you up and abroad once more, to say nothing of the golden sunshine, and the pure, and invigorating air that breathes upon our frames?'

'And to say nothing' said Miles, 'of a certain young gentleman who perhaps, nay I am certain, will arrive soon.'

Edith did not blush as once she would have done at this allusion, but she turned her head away. The three walked on in silence, a few steps, till they came to a rustic bench beneath a clump of forest trees, commanding a view of the entrance to the avenue that terminated in the mansion-house. Here they whiled away the time with conversation. At the expiration of half an hour, Forrester, who had been for a few moments looking down the road, called the attention of his companion to a horseman, at the moment some half a mile off.

'Look there, Clara,' said he, 'that fellow rides like a madman. He looks as if his horse were running away. What a Mazzeppa-like pace!'

The ladies both uttered an exclamation of terror. Clara trembled at the peril of the horseman, Edith from a foreboding of his identity. Near and nearer came the horse and rider. The latter was an elegantly-formed young man with a splendid seat in the saddle, while the animal he bestrode was light-limbed, fleet and powerful. He neared the domain of the Folly. Yet he drew not his rein. He approached the entrance of the avenue, but with little diminution of his speed. He gave one glance up the avenue, and then wheeling his horse with the speed of lightning, plunged the rowels deep in

his flanks, charged the iron gate, cleared it rapidly, and came careering up the avenue with the speed of the wind. Reining up his horse till he almost threw him upon his haunches, he flung himself from the saddle, and turned towards the group with a shout of delight. It was JULIAN FORRESTER.

'Brother! Clara! Dear Edith.'

He embraced each in turn.

'Welcome, welcome brother,' cried Miles and his wife. Edith's welcome was a tear.

The mutual enquiries and replies of friends met after a long absence are deeply interesting to the parties themselves, but to them only. We shall not, therefore, attempt to transcribe the broken, yet animated conversation of the Forrester family. Suffice it to say, that one hour after the arrival of Julian, he and Edith were seated, side by side, in a remote and shady part of the woodland appertaining to the Folly, engaged in the earnest interchange of thought.

'You are changed, Julian' said Edith as she gazed tenderly and tearfully upon the face of her companion.

'Aye, Edith,' answered the young lover; 'I have roughed it a good deal, since I've been away, and the suns of Italy and Greece, to say nothing of the seabreezes of the Atlantic are no great respecters of fair complexions. But if I do not look so melancholy and poetical as when I went away, I have brought back a sturdier frame: and if somewhat changed in externals, there is one thing I am not changed in:

(Cælum not animam mutant qui trans mare currunt.)

My heart still beats for you as fondly, aye, by Heaven! more fondly than when I left you, an unwilling wanderer, dear Edith.'

The words smote upon her heart like an icbolt. What a heart she had thrown away in her weakness and her madness! Yet she could not crush his young hopes in the first hour of his return: her lips were sealed to confession. Nothing was before her but duplicity and deception. And though her proud spirit revolted, though her heart was torn by the struggle, though she despised herself for every false word, she schooled her lips to the language of light-herted and confiding love. She smiled, she even blushed, and ere the interview with her lover was over, she promised once more, as she had done before his departure for Europe, to be his, and even fixed the 'happy' day.

'Dear brother,' said Julian to Miles as they sat in the library that evening, I owe you a debt of gratitude I never can repay. To your care I confided my heart's treasure when I went away. I conjured you to watch over Edith with more than a brother's care—not to permit the winds of heaven to visit her too rudely. You have done it. You have been a faithful guardian of her happiness and mine, and you have given her back to my arms the loveliest and happiest of her sex. Good night, brother, and may God bless you for all your kindness.'

'Good night, Julian.'

'What are the tortures of hell to such a speech as that?' thought Miles, after his brother had retired. 'Now indeed do I reap the harvest I have sowed. And Edith too, shares the punishment as she did the guilt. Good God! when and where is this to end?'

CHAPTER X.

THE WEDDING.

Sooner, or later, all things pass away,—
 And are no more. The beggar and the king,
 With equal steps, tread forward to their end;
 The reconciling grave
 Swallows distinction first, that made us foes,
 Then all alike lie down in peace together.
 SOUTHERN, *Isabella; or the Fatal Marriage.*

On the evening preceding the day appointed for the marriage of Edith and Julian, Miles Forrester was seated in his library. The door opened and Edith, pale and spectre-like, glided in, and seated herself opposite to her destroyer.

'Well, Edith,' said Miles 'to-morrow gives you a legitimate protector and makes my brother happy.'

Edith smiled, a sad, yet strange and scornful smile

'To-morrow, to-morrow!' she repeated, half unconsciously. 'A happy bridegroom, yes, yes, and a happy bride—don't I look like a happy bride, Miles? Is not the blush of innocence and purity upon my cheek? Faugh! Methinks I hear the fiends laugh at this mockery.'

'Hush! Edith, hush!' said Miles, alarmed at her language and manner, 'this is all for the best.'

'Aye, all for the best, the best!' muttered Edith. 'Now hear me, Miles Forrester. I am to go through a dreadful ordeal. God knows I deserve it. What if my guilt is punished by a sudden death!'

'Do not speak of death' said Forrester, and he attempted to lay his hand upon Edith's shoulder, but she shrank shudderingly from his touch.'

'Don't touch me,' said she: 'my person is now sacred to your brother, and to-morrow—oh!' she cried, wringing her hands 'that the morrow might never dawn for me! and yet, if I am not deceived, it will bring me peace.'

'Aye, peace for all of us!'

'You little know my meaning,' said Edith, sadly. 'What if my heart should break in the trial!'

'You alarm me.'

'Let me speak, Miles; my time is very precious. If it be as I hope, my woes are destined to a speedy ending. But you must promise me one thing, Miles; and you must swear to perform it, swear by your hopes of salvation and by all the love you bear to me. If I die, there will be a broken heart to mourn me—Julian's. Now, swear that you will divulge to him the story of our guilt. Let not his noble heart be wrecked by despairing grief for a creature like me. Open his eyes to my infamy. Confront his indignation, but oh! by all that's holy, speak. Lay the blame fully on me; I am equally guilty with yourself. But make the confession. Fail to do this, and the spirit of a ruined and broken-hearted girl shall haunt you by night and by day, sleeping or waking, at the table or the altar, till living, you shall think that hell itself is around you, and dying, die in the midst of horrors unspeakable.'

'Edith, you are beside yourself. All will be well yet.'

'Promise to fulfil my request.'

'I swear it solemnly.'

'Enough. Oh! Miles, the life I have led for many months should have maddened me, if it has not done so. Nay, I would not live over again the past four weeks for all the treasures of the earth. When I am dead, Miles, oh! be kind to Clara. Repent, repent. Devote your life to expiation. You may yet be saved. In that case we shall never meet again, even in the life eternal.'

She rose from her seat. Miles Forrester would have detained her, but she glided away from the library as sadly and noiselessly as she had entered it.

The sun of the next day rose brilliantly and cheerfully. Forrester's Folly was alive with preparations for the wedding. Servants hurried to and fro, and almost every face wore an expression of animation and joy. In anticipation of this event, a beautiful villa in the neighborhood, the property of Julian Forrester, had been fitted up for the reception of the bride who was to go thither immediately after the bridal ceremony. Julian, who was a man of highly cultivated taste, had brought home from Italy and France, paintings, statuary and furniture to adorn the interior and render it worthy to be the home of one of the loveliest women in his native land.

Meanwhile Edith, happily unnoticed amid the general bustle of preparation, wished every hour that it might be her last. Once or twice her mother and sister surprised her in tears; but the latter laughed at what she deemed a timid maiden's passing sorrow, and rallied her with the old homely couplet:

Bride's tears and rain in May
Very quickly pass away.

The drawing-room of the Folly was gaily lighted up in the evening, although but a small party was assembled beneath the lustre of its chandeliers, for Julian cared not for a garish wedding, and Edith shrank with horror from the idea of one.

At length the clergyman arrived, a venerable and cheerful looking man, to perform the ceremony. Mr. Vernon, himself a fine looking, grey-haired man, stood up to give the bride away. Julian was beside her, radiant with happiness. Near them stood Miles proudly and self-sustained. His eyes and those of Edith met. The bride was pale—paler than the white rose in her hair, or the spotless snow of her satin robe. Yet she was beautiful with the lifeless beauty of a statue. It was a moment of deep interest. As the first words fell from the lips of the clergyman a heavy doleful sigh escaped from those of the bride. Her head drooped—yet more pallid grew her countenance—the blood forsook her lips—she sank into her father's arms.

'Air! air! room! rooom! the bride has fainted.'

Supported by her sister and the bridesmaids, she was borne from the apartment.

Julian paced the room in agony. His very life was in Edith. What if she were seriously ill? The moments passed away and still she returned not. Word was brought to Julian, to Miles and Mr. Vernon, that it was no trifling indisposition that had caused the fainting fit of the bride. Blood had been seen to issue from her lips. A carriage was sent for a physician. To Julian the time that elapsed before its return seemed a century; while his guilty brother recalled the conversation of the preceding night and trembled with a thousand nameless fears.

At length the carriage came back, bringing, not the physician, for he had gone upon a distant visit, but the apothecary of the village, who, as having some reputation for medical skill, was considered an adequate substitute. He was taken at once to the chamber of Edith—the scene of her betrayal and her guilt.

Verjuice approached the bed. Its pale and sinking occupant lifted up

EDITH VERNON.

her eyes. One instant's glance convinced the apothecary of the identity of the invalid with the youth who one short month before had bribed him with gold for a phial of the deadliest poison. He mechanically felt her pulse; he prescribed some medicine; muttered something of 'hemorrhage of the lungs,' 'hopeless case,' and took his leave.

Edith spoke out: 'I am dying,' she said. 'Summon the family around me.'

An agonized group it was that assembled round that terrible death-bed; there were the agony of sorrow and the agony of guilt. Julian, Clara, the wretched father and mother, bent over the dying girl convulsed with emotion. Miles Forrester stood apart, pallid as death itself. Edith took leave of each, but ever her eyes wandered and sought out Miles, who returned her glaring glance by a fixed and stony stare, horrible to look upon.

The dying girl held up a warning finger. 'Remember!' said she, and closed her eyes.

At intervals her bosom heaved convulsively. A long pause and she suddenly opened her eyes, started up, and glared wildly round the room.

'Drive them away!' she cried. 'Drive away those winged things! there are myriads of them peopling space,' and wildly waving her hands, she fell back shuddering upon her pillow.

The old clergyman who had been summoned, shook his head. 'Let us pray,' said he. They knelt around the bedside of the dying girl, and repeated after the pastor, with trembling lips, the prayer that he pronounced. It was interrupted by the sobs of the mourners, and unearthly groans from the lips of the dying.

'Miles--Miles Forrester,' muttered Edith. 'I must speak--one word--with him--alone--alone--one word.'

The dying wish was obeyed. The chamber was cleared. Ten minutes passed away, and then the mourners, who were waiting in the entry, were startled by a low deep moan from the chamber of Edith. It was the death-cry! The chamber door flew open, and Miles Forrester burst forth! white as the dead herself, his eyeballs starting from their sockets, his teeth clenched, and his whole appearance indicative of horror. He swept past them, rushed down the staircase, dashed into his library and locked himself in. Julian Forrester was led to the couch of Edith. A marble image of loveliness lay upon the bed, but the spirit that had once informed it had fled--whither?

CHAPTER XL

THE FATE OF FORRESTER.

Even in his hour of triumph, while the gore,
Warm from this wound, yet reeks upon his steel,
Arise--surround--pursue the Murderer--Scn.

Bulwer.

A long funeral train followed the remains of the beautiful and ill-fated Edith to her last resting-place, in the burying-ground attached to the King's Chapel in Boston. Her sudden death was the theme of mystery and marvel. The news of it fell upon the fashionable world of Boston like a thunder-clap; and as the funeral *cortege* moved along Tremont, then Common Street, many a pale face gazed at it with a melancholy and startled expression from the aristocratic old mansions on the right and left. Conspicuous among the mourners trod Miles Forrester, the dignified representative of grief. Men sympathised with his sorrow, and praised his manly bearing--for Forrester was very popular. Of the heart-broken Julian little heed was taken.

The last rites for the dead were performed beneath a lowering sky in the old church-yard. The mourners dispersed slowly and sought the carriage. The sexton and his assistant alone lingered for a moment, waiting until two persons evidently not belonging to the funeral train saw fit to take their departure. One of them was an old woman--the other a youth, fantastically dressed who knelt down with clasped hands upon the newly-packed earth and sod.

'Come, Dick,' said the former, impatiently. 'It is time for us to be off. Quit sobbing there. The pretty lady's dead.'

'Dick will wait here till the pretty lady wakes.'

'That will not be in this world. She's as cold as the birds you shot last summer in the wood.'

'And who killed her?' asked the lad, rising.

The old woman laid her finger on her lips. The sexton shook his head. They left the church-yard, and the old woman and her companion immediately set out, as fast as the infirmities of the former would permit, in the direction of Roxbury. They were never seen again in Boston or its environs.

But to return to Forrester. In pursuance of the dying injunction of the ill-fated Edith, her remains had no sooner been committed to the grave, than an interview took place between him and Julian in a secluded apartment in the Folly. Their conference was long, but the nature of it can only be inferred. High words were heard by the servants and once or twice a heavy noise. Julian was seen to leave the house and rush to the stable, whence he issued, mounted on his black horse, and rode away at full speed. He never returned to the Folly. Hours elapsed, and then Clara sought her husband, though forbidden to approach the room in which the interview took place. The servants were told that their master had fallen in a fit, and medical assistance was summoned. He was confined to bed from some unknown cause for many weeks, and when he again went forth appeared terribly haggard and emaciated.

'However, he again recovered his health to the delight of every one who knew him, and they were legion. In private and public life, as time rolled

EDITH VERNON.

en he was brilliantly successful. Whenever he spoke at the bar, or in the senate, thousands thronged to catch the words that fell from his lips. Moreover, he gained an enviable reputation for his piety. He joined a religious society, and was lauded universally as being a chosen pillar in the temple of Israel. His charity was likewise brilliantly conspicuous.

'He was a trustee of the Savings Bank.
And lectured roundly every evil doer :
Gave dinners daily to wealth, power and rank
And sixpence every Sunday to the poor.'

Much good he really did accomplish. He took an early stand in the cause of temperance, and having vainly endeavored to induce Dr. Verjuice to renounce his evil ways, was instrumental in having this worthy gentleman incarcerated as a common drunkard. He died in duance, from the forced change of habit, and on his death-bed raved wildly and darkly of sins committed involving the honor and peace of a distinguished family. But his words were taken as the idle imaginings of *delirium tremens*. With the downfall of his tyrant, the star of Humphrey rose. He succeeded to the vacant stool, and was duly installed, by the generosity of a few choice spirits who appreciated his worth, as proprietor of the Pestle and Mortar, regit on the occasion of his assuming the reins of authority.

* * * * *

The old road to B., when within a mile or so of the village diverged to avoid a considerable elevation of ground, and skirts its base in a semi-circle intersecting a belt of pine trees so dense and dark, that their shadows form a twilight at noonday. Here, on a chill, autumnal evening, some five and twenty years after the date of the commencement of our story, stood a young man, concealed by the bushes at an angle of the road. He was poorly clad.

'It is the last chance' he muttered. 'Its a bold throw, but d—n me if I care what the luck is. Gold or the gallows, starvation or strangling, it has come to this. The first one that passes, is booked.' The click of a pistol-lock was the appropriate climax of the sentence.

Scarcely was it uttered, when the tramp of a horse's hoofs were heard; and a horseman mounted on a white steed, conspicuous through the darkness of the night, approached the ambush. The lurking assailant rushed forth.

'Stop there!' he muttered; 'your money or your life.' The horseman was a brave man. He rose in his stirrups, and struck furiously at his assailant with the heavy but of his riding-whip.

'You will have it then,' said the ruffian with an oath. A dull report was heard, for the muzzle of the pistol was pressed to the heart of the hapless traveller. He fell heavily to the ground, and the news of his fate was told at his home by the arrival of his horse, frantic with terror, with tell-tale blood-drops on his saddle-bow and shoulders.

The assassin rifled the pockets of the murdered man, and then fled across the country by meadows, by-paths and lanes, until he arrived at the old hut described in the fifth chapter of our story. Here, having bolted himself in he struck a light.

'I thought I should know the old crib!' he muttered. 'The hag described it to me in her dying moments. Here I can stay till the hue and cry goes over. Well, I've reached the last step of the ladder. It wanted murder to complete my education. He was a d—d fool though, to die for a handful of *stimsies* and *gold finches*. Let me count the *swag*.'

There were a purse and pocket book, both full. But the latter bore a

NAME. And as he read it, the features of the murderer grew whiter than the face of death with horror.

'As Christ lives' he yelled, smiting his forehead with his clenched hands, *'I have killed my own father!'*

Near the tomb of the Forrester's in the churchyard of B. may be seen a stone erected to the 'memory of an unfortunate young man who departed this life in January 183—' but the name of the deceased is not given, nor the manner of his death stated. No flowers bloom around this cenotaph, and the country people are averse to speak of the deceased. Some, however, will tell you of a dreadful murder—of a criminal condemned to die, who did die upon the scaffold, though a lady who had fruitlessly furnished him with the means of suicide, obtained his body, placed it in consecrated ground, and raised a tablet above his ashes. These whispered particulars forming a dark portion of a 'tale of Crime and Retribution.'

THE END.

5/3

22

GLEASON'S
PUBLISHING HALL,
No. 11-2 TREMONT ROW.

IS NOW THE MOST EXTENSIVE PUBLISHING HOUSE IN NEW ENGLAND.

At this establishment may be found an immense stock of
NEW PUBLICATIONS AND LITHOGRAPHIC PRINTS.

~~~~~  
JUST PUBLISHED, THE FOLLOWING ORIGINAL WORKS:

**EDWARD AUSTIN, OR THE HUNTING FLASK.—A TALE OF THE FOREST AND TOWN.—By J. H. INGRAHAM, Esq.** Price 12 1-2 Cents.

**THE BELIE OF BOSTON, OR THE RIVAL STUDENTS OF CAMBRIDGE,—By HARRY HAZEL.** Price 12 -2 Cents.

**THE SPANISH GALLEON : OR, THE PIRATE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN—A ROMANCE OF THE CORSAIR KIDD.** By J. H. INGRAHAM, Esq. Price 12 1-2 cts.

**LOUISE KEMPTON ; or, Vice and Virtue Contrasted.—By a Member of the Suffolk Bar.** Price 12 1-2 Cents.

**THE MIDSHIPMAN, OR THE CORVETTE AND BRIGANTINE.** J. H. Ingraham, Esq. Price 12 1-2 cts.

Also—a great variety of other Publications.

The Trade in general will be furnished at the usual discount. All orders promptly executed.

New Works and Lithographic Prints are constantly published at the above establishment.

F. GLEASON, *Publisher.*

---

**PICTURE FRAMES AND GLASSES.**

The subscriber is prepared to furnish the Trade with Frames and glasses.—Over 20,000 Frames on hand now, which will be sold very low ; size, 10 by 14

F. GLEASON,  
No. 11-2 TREMONT ROW, BOSTON.





This book should be returned to  
the Library on or before the last date  
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred  
by retaining it beyond the specified  
time.

Please return promptly.

~~NOV 23 54 H~~

5652342

JUN 7 1969 H

CANCELLED  
JUN 21 1969  
3069411



AL 1193.5.15

Edith Vernon:

Widener Library

004718684



3 2044 080 904 709